

WIZARD
anime
INSIDER 超月刊誌

62
nov

DARKER THAN BLACK | MIZUKI INTERVIEW | MORIBITO | LINEBARRELS OF IRON

MIZUKI SPEAKS!
Exclusive Q&A with the master of monsters!

13-P
Manga
Preview!

anime

INSIDER 誌

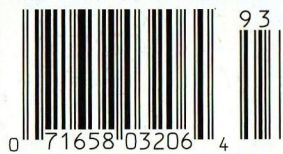
DARKER THAN BLACK

The hunt
for the
secret
agents
begins!

**+ Moribito!
Linebarrels
of Iron!
And more!**

DARKER THAN BLACK's
BAI & HEI

A SPECIAL WIZARD PUBLICATION



anime-insider.com

\$4.99 US • \$5.99 CAN

DARKER THAN BLACK © BONES •
TENSAI OKAMURA / OTB PRODUCTION
COMMITTEE • MBS, KIZARU ©
MIZUKI Production.





Claymore

AVAILABLE ON DVD **10-14-08**

STARTER SET INCLUDES

- CHAPTER 1 THE BURDEN OF THE BLADE
episodes 1-5
- 24-page Book
INTERVIEWS, CHARACTER PROFILES,
ARTWORK, AND SKETCHES

PREY FOR REVENGE

FIND OUT MORE AT FUNIMATION.COM/CLAYMORE PRE-ORDER NOW!

CLAYMORE

BEST
BUY

hastings

Right **Stu**.com

amazon.com

WICKET
Fry's

MACY'S
ENTERTAINMENT

fye

FUNIMATION
ENTERTAINMENT

Based on the comic "CLAYMORE" by Norihiro Yagi published by SHUEISHA Inc. (Jump Comics) © Norihiro Yagi / Shueisha © DNDP VAP, avex entertainment, Madhouse. Licensed by FUNimation Productions, Ltd. All Rights Reserved.

contents 誌の内容

ANIME INSIDER #62 • NOVEMBER 2008



Features

28 FIGHTING SPIRIT

Let our A to Z guide for *Moribito* illuminate Cartoon Network's newest fantasy anime. **By Rob Bricken**

30 AFTER DARK

The Contractors of *Darker Than Black* don't need a license to kill, but they do pay a price for their deadly abilities. Find out why these assassins are (mostly) the good guys. **By Rob Bricken**

38 THE MONSTER MAKER

An exclusive interview with the legendary Shigeru Mizuki, creator of *Gegege no Kitaro* and godfather of the yokai renaissance. **By Carolyn Fowlkes; Interview by Mie Ikeda**

44 FATE/STAY NIGHT MANGA PREVIEW

The age-old battle for the Holy Grail will be fought in Tokyo, where an orphaned boy struggles to survive even learning about the war. **By Dat Nishiwaki**



NO WAY
CAN THIS GUY
BEAT MY
PATENTED
"COOL STARE."



Departments

4 FROM THE TOP

6 ANIMAIL

12 A.I. NEWS

22 A.I. FIVE *Claymore*

24 FLASH IN JAPAN

Linebarrels of Iron

26 LAST MAN STANDING

Sana Kurata vs. Mitsuki Koyama

56 DVD An interview with the Kano Sisters

62 TELEVISION The world of J-dramas

64 MANGA

Gankutsuou breaks manga ground

70 THEATRICAL

Sam Jackson returns to *Afro Samurai*

72 CONPLAY

Nekocon hosts GPKISM

74 MUSIC

Dir en gray's winter tour

76 VIDEOGAMES

Metal Slug 7

82 STUFF

86 J-LIFE

88 PARTING SHOT

ON THE COVER



There's been a profound lack of secret agents in anime as of late, but *Darker Than Black* is bringing them back in spades. Discover their supernatural powers—and their prices—on p. 30.

DARKER THAN BLACK © BONES • TENSAI OKAMURA / OTB PRODUCTION COMMITTEE • MBS.

GEgege NO KITARO © MIZUKI PRO. GANKUTSUOU © MANHO. MAEDAYURI ARIMASA. AFRO SAMURAI © TAKASHI OKAZAKI / GEN.

SHONEN JUMP™

NARUTO

Clash of Ninja 2

REVOLUTION

THE BEST FIGHTER
ON WII IS BACK!



1-4 Player Mayhem!

New Original Storyline
featuring the Anbu!

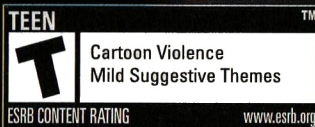
Over 30 Fighters!

All New Gameplay Modes



Wii™

Available October 2008



NARUTO ©2002 MASASHI KISHIMOTO. All Rights Reserved. SHONEN JUMP™ and NARUTO™ are trademarks of Shueisha, Inc. in the U.S. and other countries. This product is manufactured, distributed and sold under license from VIZ Media, LLC. All Rights Reserved. Game and Software ©2008 TOMY, CLASH OF NINJA™ and ©2008 SHUEISHA. All Rights Reserved. TOMY and its logo are trademarks of TOMY. VIZ Media and its logo are trademarks of VIZ Media, LLC. D Publisher and its logo are trademarks of D Publisher of America, Inc. Wii and the Wii logo are trademarks of Nintendo. ©2006 Nintendo. The ratings icon is a registered trademark of the Entertainment Software Association.



from the top 無恥陳列

Goodbye, farewell

Even though it's chilly outside, we endure November for the promise of face-stuffing and traditional family feuds, not to mention that long weekend. Yes, I'm talking about Thanksgiving. As we inhale our Tofurky and cranberry sauce, we reflect on the things for which we're really thankful, like Adult Swim's never-ending reruns of *Inuyasha* and the insulating power of plushies.

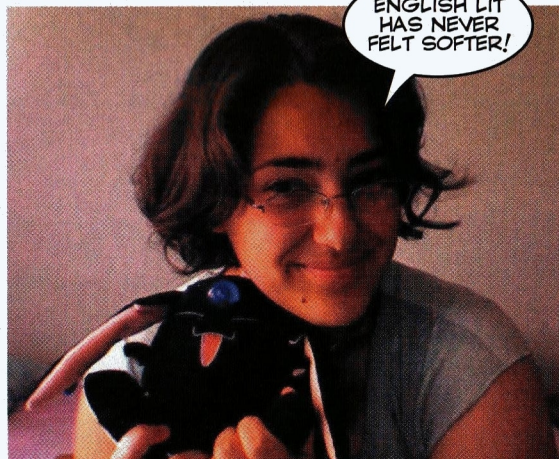
While North Americans celebrate Thanksgiving, the Japanese celebrate "Labor Thanksgiving Day" every November 23. Originally an ancient rice harvest festival, this national holiday is now set aside to commemorate the year's hard work and give thanks to one another.

With that in mind, I'd like to thank everyone for the wonderful experience I've had this summer being the caffeine provider—I mean intern—here in the *Anime Insider* office. When I started, my brain reeling from finals, I never could have imagined the daily entertainment and pleasant surprises that I would encounter. From my confession that *Sailor Moon* first sparked my interest in anime to my secret cosplaying (a white shirt, jeans and eyeliner is hardly cosplay) I have always been accepted, and treated just as well as any staffer. You know, any staffer who's required to fill the coffee pot as soon as she comes in so that her editor doesn't cry.

In all seriousness, I consider it a privilege to have been a part of the hard work that is funneled into every issue. I am grateful for these memories as well as those from our time at Otakon (my first convention!) where I embraced my inner fangirl and got to meet *Anime Insider* readers of all ages. By the time you read this, I'll be snuggling my black Mokona plushie while hitting the books. College is the best time for internships!

Nadia Arcese

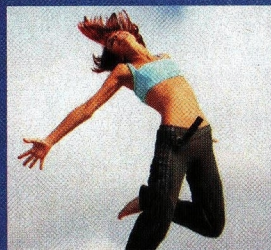
Nadia Arcese
Lame Duck Intern



STUDY BUDDIES Nadia discovers that a Mokona makes a great pillow for study breaks.

MEET THE PRESS

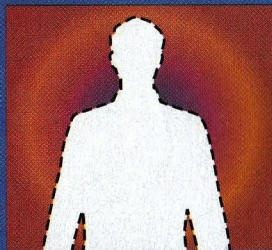
What special skill do you hope our next intern brings?



SUMMER MULLINS

Editor

The power of flight! No particular reason; I just think it would be really cool. And then I could brag to all the other magazines: "Oh, your new intern organized your library? Well, our new intern can fly."



ANGELA HANSON

Managing Editor

The power to teleport! If he or she can get to work instantly, there's no excuse for late coffee. Plus I can probably get free rides to places and save on gas.



MATT SUKOVICH

Assistant Editor

The ability to warp time. It would be perfect during the hectic closing week! Imagine: we get to the office at 9 A.M., have the intern do her magic, and within seconds it's 5 P.M. and the magazine is done!

MASTHEAD

WIZARD ENTERTAINMENT EDITORIAL

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF Scott Gramling

ANIME INSIDER MAGAZINE

EDITOR Summer Mullins

MANAGING EDITOR Angela Hanson

ASSISTANT EDITOR Matt Sukovich

TOKYO CORRESPONDENT Andrez Bergen

THE LEGEND OF THE INTERN Nadia Arcese

UNION CONTRACTOR Hei

HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGER, EDITORIAL Cheryl Padilla

CREATIVE DIRECTOR Steve Blackwell

ART DIRECTOR Arlene So

JR. ART DIRECTOR Eric Goodman

DESIGNER Jairo Leon

CONTRIBUTING DESIGNER John Gonzalez

RESEARCH EDITOR Daniel Reilly

RESEARCH ASSISTANTS Rachel Molino, Matt Powell

STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER Dylan Brucie

CONTRIBUTORS Alicia Ashby, Rob Bricken, Casey Brienza, Joe Chan, Chad Clayton, Christiana Ellis, Carolyn Fowlkes, Meghan Grant, Heidi Kemp, Gia Manry, Megan Rebuck

WIZARDUNIVERSE.COM

NEWS EDITOR Jim Gibbons

ASSISTANT EDITORS Josh Wigler

ADVERTISING/SALES

VICE PRESIDENT/ADVERTISING DIRECTOR Ken Scrudato

SALES OPERATIONS DIRECTOR Karen Evora

SALES MANAGER (NYC) Rob Baricevic

NYC PHONE (212) 765-5700 FAX (212) 765-5779

TRAFFIC COORDINATOR Sabrina John

PHONE (845) 268-3907 FAX (845) 268-5383

WIZARD ENTERTAINMENT

CHAIRMAN Gareb S. Shamus

PRESIDENT/COO Fred Pierce

VICE PRESIDENT/CFO Edward L. DuPré

SR. VP/BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT Stephen Shamus

SR. VP/OPERATIONS Joe Yanarella

VP/DIRECTOR OF PRODUCTION Darren Sanchez

ASSISTANT PRODUCTION MANAGER Travis Escarfullery

MARKETING SERVICES MANAGER Maria Capello

PROGRAMMING DIRECTOR Adam Tracey

EXHIBIT SALES Jodie Westhoff

ONLINE MARKETING COORDINATOR Candice Frangione

MANAGER, ONLINE MARKETING Nicole Zinna

VP OF CIRCULATION Tom Conboy

CIRCULATION MANAGER Jen Santopietro

DIRECTOR, SALES Peter Katz

COORDINATORS, ONLINE SALES A.J. Fierro, Nolan Muna,

Ashley Mitkowski

CONTROLLER Scott Klein

ACCOUNTING COORDINATOR Julie Wood

CREDIT MANAGER Hassan Godwin

SYSTEM ADMINISTRATOR Nick Bartozkas

SPECIAL PROJECTS MANAGER Nitza Pierce

CUSTOMER SERVICE

PHONE (845) 268-3594 EMAIL customerservice@wizardent.com

SUBSCRIPTIONS subscriptions@wizardent.com

CONVENTIONS CUSTOMER SERVICE

PHONE (845) 268-8068 EMAIL conventions@wizardent.com

FULFILLMENT SUPERVISOR Roberto Borges

TO SUBSCRIBE Call (845) 268-3594 or go to www.anime-insider.com

FOR RETAIL SALES Call (845) 268-2000 and ask for the circulation department

Anime Insider, volume one, issue sixty-two (62), November 2008.

Please direct all editorial-related inquiries to Anime Insider Editorial Dept., c/o Wizard Entertainment Group, 151 Wells Avenue, Congers, NY 10920-2064 or fax (845) 268-3562. Please direct all subscription-related inquiries to Anime Insider Subscription Dept., P.O. Box 762, Shrub Oak, NY 10588. Twelve-issue subscription rate is \$28.00 (Canada \$55.00, all other countries \$80.00). All payments in U.S. funds only.

Any statements made, expressed or implied in *Anime Insider* are solely those of columnists or persons being interviewed and do not represent the editorial position of the publisher, who does not accept responsibility for such statements. All characters and artwork shown in *Anime Insider* are trademark and © of their respective owners.

Anime Insider (ISSN 1547-3767) is published monthly by Gareb Shamus Enterprises Inc., 151 Wells Avenue, Congers, NY 10920. Periodicals postage paid at Congers, NY and additional mailing offices. Additional A mail enclosed, USPS Number: 021-731.

POSTMASTER: Send address changes to Wizard Entertainment, PO Box 2175, Danbury, CT 06813-2175.

Entire contents © 2008 Gareb Shamus Enterprises Inc. The *Anime Insider* logo is protected through trademark registration in the United States of America. Publication information may not be reproduced in part or whole in any form without prior written permission of Wizard Entertainment and Gareb S. Shamus. PRINTED IN THE U.S.A.

COMING IN NOVEMBER FROM **BANDAI** entertainment®

THE GIRL WHO LEAPT THROUGH TIME 時をかける少女

"The Girl Who Leapt Through Time is a genuine display of passion and an instant classic."

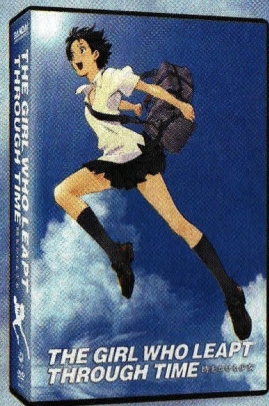
- Anime Insider

2007 Tokyo International Anime Fair winner "Animation of the Year!" From Director Mamoru Hosoda (One Piece)

SRP: \$29.98

REGULAR EDITION INCLUDES:

English and Japanese 5.1 audio (with English subtitles), Audio commentary, Music video, Theatrical Trailer, Promo clip.



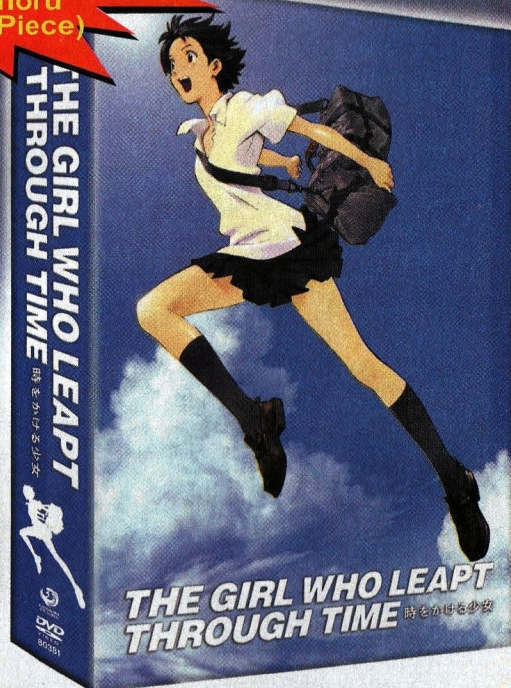
LIMITED EDITION BOX

SRP: \$49.98

LIMITED EDITION INCLUDES:

2-disc DVD set in high quality artbox, English and Japanese 5.1 audio (with English subtitles), Original Soundtrack, Storyboards, Audio commentary, interview with director Mamoru Hosoda, Behind the Scenes are Premiere, Music video, Theatrical Trailer, Promo clip.

© 2006 TOKIKAKE Film Partners



LIMITED EDITION VOL. 4

SRP: \$49.98

INCLUDES:

English and Japanese Audio (English subtitles), plus all Regular Edition extras as well as Girl's Summer Uniform T-Shirt, Miyuki Character CD, Alternate DVD cover.

© Kagami YOSHIMIZU/ Lucky Paradise Inc

Lucky Star

REGULAR EDITION VOL. 4

SRP: \$29.98

INCLUDES:

Liner Notes, The Adventures of Minoru Shiraishi, Key scenes galleries.



AVAILABLE AT THESE AND OTHER FINE RETAILERS:



BANDAI entertainment®
www.bandai-ent.com

SO YOU'RE SAYING SHINY METAL GETS MORE CHICKS?

A-YEP.

HELP WANTED

Guys, I'm in trouble...and I need your help. You know how I know so much about anime? It's because I've spent eight years in the industry, watching every show and movie and OVA I could get my hands on, talking to people in the business, going to Japan and all that stuff. I have lived, breathed and slept anime for almost a decade and now...I'm stuck. I don't know what to watch, what to read, what to do! So I'd like you guys to help me out—tell me what anime I should be blowing my A.I. paycheck on and why. And I'll keep answering your questions. Deal?



IT'S SO HOT ON THE SURFACE, I'M SWEATING BULLETS!

GURREN TO TOWN

I would open this letter telling you how much I love your magazine and all that jazz, but my declaration of love cannot wait a second. For the past few months, you have had several articles about *Gurren Lagann* and how epic it was. To be honest, I thought it was borderline obsessive.

I watched *GL* out of curiosity, then I couldn't stop. I loved it. I MORE than loved it. It became a new favorite. I couldn't hate a single character and I loved every second of it. You had every right to obsess. There's just something about it that makes it so different from every other anime. It's like the anime is screaming "Hey viewer, I'm going to do whatever I want because I'm so damn cool." I got everything out of it I would have usually gotten out of a shojo series, and more. I went from ignoring it to waiting to buy the box set.

Shelby Tozier
Via e-mail

*We're happy to help, Shelby. Suffice to say, if we give something as much coverage as we have *Gurren Lagann*, you can trust us—it really is worth all that hype. Any of you guys who haven't checked it out yet, you're missing out.*

STRIKING TWICE

I heard that there might be a sequel to my favorite anime, *Fullmetal Alchemist*. Is this true?

Racheal R.
Via e-mail

I thought I'd get this piece of good news out of the way early—it's true! It was announced on the Japanese

release of the manga volume 20 and it'll be animated by Studio Bones again. Check out the story on page 14 for more details!

CREAM FILLING

Hey A.I.! I'm a pretty new reader, but I thought I'd write in. So far, the magazine ROCKS! But I do have some questions.

1) Why the heck do the fillers for Masashi Kishimoto's *Naruto* suck so badly? They're a disgrace to Kishimoto-sama's genius work!

2) What's your favorite manga and anime, Bricken-sama?

Thank you very much for reading this!

Rachel Murphy
Via e-mail

*1) They are really, really bad, aren't they? I have no idea what's going on there. The fillers for similar Shonen Jump titles like *Bleach* and *One Piece* aren't great, but they're masterpieces compared to what's going on in *Naruto*.*

*2) It's a tie between *FLCL* and *Urusei Yatsura*, an old series *Rumiko Takahashi* did before *Inuyasha* and *Ranma 1/2*. I generally think *FLCL* is the coolest thing ever made, and *Urusei Yatsura* is 200 episodes of hilarity and insanity. I can never decide between them.*

SHIPPUDEN COMES IN

Hey Bricken-sama, how's it going over on your end? Okay, getting down to it, I have a few questions for ya.

1) Both my best friend and I are getting bored with the filler *Naruto* episodes (so much that I barely watch them). I know that somewhere you already answered this question, but my memory can not recall which issue it was. So, we both want to know; when will *Shippuden* start airing?

2) Okay, this one has been bugging me for a while now. I want to know what the symbol on Jiraiya's head band stands for. Can you help clear up my curiosity?

Well, those are my questions for now. Ja Ne!!!

Lindz Hill
Via e-mail

*1) VIZ has stated that *Shippuden* will air immediately after the first series ends on Cartoon Network. So, assuming Cartoon Network doesn't schedule any*

GURREN LAGANN'S YOKO



THE WALLFLOWER

holiday repeats, Shippuden should actually start this December. Cross your fingers!

2) Are you ready for this? It means "oil." I can't explain it without spoiling some stuff in Shippuden, so you'll have to wait. Sorry!

WILD FLOWER

I love your magazine and anime so I just wanted to ask a question. I recently finished *The Wallflower* and it was one of the best comedy/action anime that I've seen. I loved it. I was just wondering if there were any other anime just like it?

Yamel Cabrera
Via e-mail

There's nothing just like *The Wallflower*, which is a swell anime based on an utterly fantastic manga available from Del Rey. Any guy who's avoided picking it up since 80% of the covers have bishonen on it are totally missing out. Try *Ouran High School Host Club*—it's an excellent mix of comedy and pretty, pretty boys.

PIECE CORPS

I am a huge *One Piece* fan too and I was wondering if FUNimation is going to dub the first seven movies of *One Piece* too, and if they are when do you think that could happen? I'm not really looking for a specific date but maybe an estimation, because I realize they're probably busy with the episodes too. Also, just so it's clear, did they do the 8th movie first because it was the latest one or because 4Kids had just finished the Alabasta

part? Anyway, thanks for your time!
Adela Stammerjohan
Via e-mail

Since the eighth movie was basically a recap of the Alabasta saga, the last arc 4Kids dubbed for Toonami, I know both FUNimation and Toei were interested in having the movie come out with FUNi's new voice cast in hope of getting old fans back to *One Piece* and picking up new ones. As for the first seven movies... "We are all huge fans of the *One Piece* series and movies so certainly we would love to acquire more content featuring this pirate crew!" said P.R. Manager Jackie Smith. "Plus, it would give us more opportunities to say 'Aaaargh!' like pirates do—and who doesn't want that?"

GREAT DANE

I'm from Denmark, and only by coincidence did I manage to get a hold of this wonderful magazine!

In Danish published manga, it always, at some point, says in the books "This series has a total of 'x' books, and they will be published one a month, every second month," but in the English published manga I have, it doesn't say that ANYWHERE! And it seriously makes me mad. Why is that?

Miriam Gradel (there will be no MacGuffin!)
Via e-mail

Wow! Anime Insider is so international. Thanks for taking the trouble to find us, Miriam! As for your question, basically, you Danes are getting a service which no Americans get anymore. TOKYOPOP used to provide such a service back in the day, but they stopped, for a variety of reasons. As for the manga count, most series are licensed while they're ongoing, so no one really knows the count. If they printed what was available at the time, well—back when VIZ first published *Naruto* Vol. 1 in America, they'd have had to say it was "1 of 18" or so. Reprints of manga don't get edited, so that info would never change—even though now there are nearly 30 volumes available. The manga companies collectively decided it would be better to say nothing than accidentally

confuse people.

As for the dates, it's the same deal, plus the fact that a variety of things can screw up a manga publisher's production schedule; an error at the printers, Japan giving materials late, plenty of stuff. Anything could happen to make a printed publication date wrong, so why risk it? Still, when it's right, it's quite nice, isn't it?

BOSCH PIT

What is anime's fascination with Johnny Yong Bosch? Seriously; *Bleach*, *Trigun*, *Code Geass*, *Eureka Seven*, *Devil May Cry 4* and those are just the ones I can think of off the top of my head without taking a look at his Wiki page. How does he continue to get the same roles as the main protagonist voice actor? It's gotten to the point where every time I watch a new anime with a teen hero determined to save the world, my mind automatically assumes that it is Johnny Yong Bosch. Don't get me wrong though, I don't have any gripes against him, and I do appreciate his talents greatly as a voice actor. If I were to ever to meet him in real life I would ask for his autograph.

Donald McDowell
Via e-mail

Excellent question, Donald. We are in a bit of an abundance of Bosch nowadays. I think he's stellar as Ichigo in *Bleach*, and he was excellent as Vash in *Trigun*. He obviously does great work. But why, oh why, was he cast as *Lelouch* in *Code Geass*? Not only because his voice sounds unrefined and slightly punk-ish—the total antithesis of *Lelouch* (although it's part of the reason he's great as Ichigo)—but because *Code Geass* used to air right after *Bleach* on Adult Swim! To hear the same voice from two different lead characters in two different shows in one hour was jarring, to say the least. Somebody made a bad decision there.

ENTER THE DRAGON

Hey there, I have just two quick questions for you. And I will put them in number form cause you like it that way.

1) I have heard that there is a live-action *Dragon Ball* movie coming out soon. I have heard August, but nothing yet. So the question is, is it coming out and if so, when?

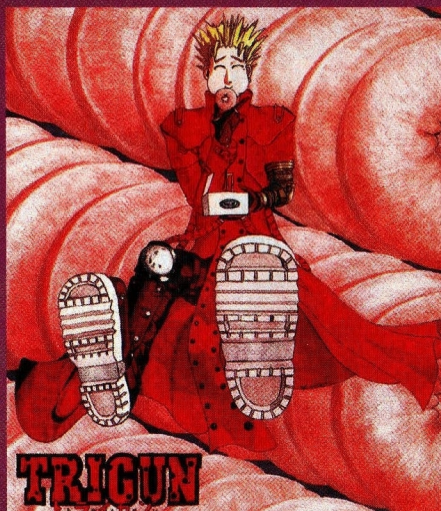
2) And for the last question. And yes, it's about *Dragon Ball* again. So this is the question: If there is a *Dragon Ball* movie coming out will it just be the *Dragon Ball*



DRAGON BALL Z'S GOKU



TOHRU HONDA from FRUITS BASKET
Tyler Charles, Douglassville, PA



VASH THE STAMPEDE from TRIGUN
Kyle J. Adriaance, Johnstown, NY



CAST from DISGAEA
Anne Schuler, St. Louis, MO



YOKO from GURREN LAGANN
Abner Ravela, Baldwin Park, CA



CAST from LUCKY STAR
Rio Reyes, Columbia Heights, MN



GARA from NARUTO
Anel Garcia, Grand Prairie, TX

series or will it be *Dragon Ball* and *Dragon Ball Z* all rolled into one?

Mike D.
Via e-mail

1) The movie does exist, but it'll be coming out on April 3, 2009, last we heard. You'll definitely see more about the movie in future issues of *Anime Insider*.

2) It's more a mish-mash of *Dragon Ball*, as *Goku* (played by Justin Chatwin) sets out to find the seven dragon balls with *Bulma*, trains with *Master Roshi* (played by Chow Yun-Fat) and eventually fights *Piccolo* (James Marsters, better known as *Spike* on *Buffy* and *Angel*). If it does well, expect some *Z* to make it into the sequel.

ENDLESS INUYASHA

Hello, *Anime Insider*. I would first like to say that I love your magazine and read it every month. I know that once an anime license is up, the American companies can't show it or sell it, so how is it that Adult Swim can show *Inuyasha* over and over? I'm not complaining, I just want to know.

Alecia Young
Via e-mail

Well, *VIZ* is kind of a special case. Because it is owned by two Japanese publishing companies—*Shueisha* and *Shogakukan*—it just kind of gets licenses from its parent companies, without having to bid on them. *VIZ* won't be losing either the *Inuyasha* or the *Naruto* license unless something really bizarre happens. That's why *Inuyasha* can stay on the air, but many other series can't.

Oddly, both *Bandai* and *Geneon*—both of whom had Japanese parent companies—still had to bid on all of their anime series, and pay up, even when their parent companies owned them. Kind of silly, right?

TOSSED IN TRANSLATION

I was going to send you some scotch to enjoy with my question, but the shipping was insane! Anyway, I wanted to know if subbing was done over in Japan or the US. I have been really thinking that I want to go to school to learn Japanese, but then what? I love anime and think it would be awesome to be able to having a job translating. But with my luck I would graduate and have to sweep the floors of a place like *Anime Insider* because there isn't anything available. Arigato!

Kelly Martin
Via e-mail

I appreciate the thought, Kelly, but if people start sending me booze, someone's going to get into trouble. Probably all of us.

English dubbing is done mostly in America; there's a bit of anime work to be found in New York, a decent amount in Texas (thanks to *FUNimation*) and probably the most in L.A. But don't worry about having to sweep—if you learn to fluently speak and translate Japanese, there are tons of job opportunities for you. It's not just the series that needs to get translated—the business contracts, the meetings, the press coverage—all of it needs translation, and that's true for every company that does business with Japan—not just anime!

STRAIT JACKET

ストレイト・ジャケット

FROM THE CREATOR OF SCRAPPED PRINCESS

Rated
"Very Good"
by AnimeNewsNetwork.com

VOICEOVER TALENT:

CRISPIN FREEMAN
(SUPERMAN IN JUSTICE LEAGUE HEROES,
HELLSING, BLOOD+)

KARI WAHLGREN
(BEN10, JUSTICE LEAGUE HEROES)

In a world where sorcery and science co-exist, the power of magic comes with a price: Humans who do not take proper precautions are transformed into horrific demons. Those who destroy these demons — and run the highest risk of all — are tactical sorcerists known as 'Strait Jackets'. Monsters, murder and redemption collide in this explosive anime written by Ichiro Sakaki (SCRAPPED PRINCESS) and based on his popular novel.

SPECTACULAR
HOLOGRAPHIC
FOIL OCARD

BUY IT ON DVD 10.7.2008



All Program Content © 2007 Ichiro Sakaki / TOE / Endeavor
All Rights Reserved.

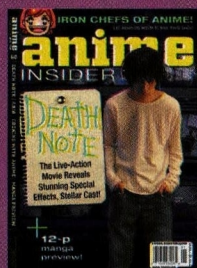
www.manga.com

www.anchorbayent.com

Anchor Bay uses recycled paper



BACKTALK



Sexiest Anime Insider cover ever! On behalf of all of the female Death Nerds of America, thank you thank you thank you!

Carolyn B.
Harrisburg, PA

You left out poor Prosecutor Payne in your list of abusive *Phoenix Wright* lawyers. Sure, he isn't the most intimidating person to take the prosecutor's bench...but come on. His wig ended up in Mr. Wright's face at least once.

Sam Lebel
Via e-mail

How could you write a piece on crazy anime hair without including Shinjiro Hayashida from *Cromartie High*? His purple crazy mohawk thing defies logic! **IT MOVES ON ITS OWN!**

Katlyn Patricia Tenold
Via e-mail

I was pretty psyched to get the October issue of *Anime Insider*, until I saw what was on the cover. *Death Note*? AGAIN? Never have I hated anything with such a passion (except maybe my grandmother and the neighbor's dog) as I do *Death Note*.

Rosalie H.
Forks, WA

I loved the September calendar thing with all the events and birthdays. Are you going to do one of those every month? If not, why?

Candace Gibson
Boulder, CO

I was really stoked to see *Cooking Mama* on the cover! But I wish you could have added a pic of her famous "Fire Eyes"!

Michelle D.
North Eastham, MA

I saw the miyavi pic in the calendar feature; what is with this guy? I don't get Japan's fascination with guys dressing up as girls.

Jake Mazur
La Jolla, CA

Love our features? Hate our features? Tell us all about it at anime-insider@wizardent.com. We reserve the right to call you "MacGuffin" if you don't include your real name. Don't say we didn't warn you.



JOINING THE CLUB

Hello, Mr. Uzamaki! That's a very good joke. You're *Naruto*'s dad—and I'm Sakura's mom! Well, to the point!

1) Is *Ouran High School Host Club* coming to TV? I'm a big fan but I don't like subs, I don't know Japanese, I live in America and I'm broke—the last of my money went to subscribe to A.I.!

2) If *Naruto* fans are Narutards, and *Death Note* fans are Death Nerds, what are *Ouran* fans?

Mariah Osborne
Via e-mail

*I'm glad you emailed, Mariah. There's a little matter of some child support money you owe for raising our child, *Naruto*, for the last 12 years. Do you know he's subsisted on nothing but ramen this entire time? It's pitiful!*

1) No chance at all. American TV is not ready for shojo series, I'm sorry to say.

2) *Ouran* Morons, naturally.

GIRL SCOUT

Brick-san! I'm a first-time reader, long-time anime and manga lover. I have a question for you. If you wanted to watch an anime with your girlfriend, which would you recommend?

Josh McTiernan
Via e-mail

*Well, I'm assuming she's not an anime fan, because otherwise that answer would be too obvious (anything). Believe it or not, Mrs. Brick-san is not an anime fan either. Still, I've gotten her to watch and enjoy shojo series like *Kodocha* and *Fruits Basket*. All the Miyazaki films are also a safe bet.*

G WHIZ

Konnichiwa!! I was never that much of a *Gundam* fanatic, but there was one series that I always would find myself loving over and over, and that series was always *G Gundam*. So, naturally, I do not understand why everyone hates this series so much! For one of the first times, we don't have an angst-ridden sobbing depressed emo kid behind the mech of our

hopes and dreams. Also, it's armed with an interesting and inventive new storyline that does not involve space colonies and instead, a strange and surrealistic tournament. Also, you yourself said that the even the most unpopular anime have their biggest fans right? So why does everyone hate it so?

Jonathan Diell
Via e-mail

Because, Jonathan, G Gundam is goofy as all heck. One Gundam wears a sombrero, and one wears a giant fish outfit, for goodness' sake. Now, I think G Gundam is massively entertaining because it's so weird, but most regular Gundam fans are Gundam fans because the series has not been goofy, but instead a very deep, super-serious look at warfare using giant robots. G Gundam kind of goes against everything the regular Gundam stands for. Still, if you enjoy it, that's all that matters. But don't waste your time trying to convince the regular Gundam fanatics that it's good—you'll never succeed.

And with that, another installment of "Animail" has come to an end. Now, please don't forget—tell me what I should be watching, and why! My anime sanity depends on it! I'll see you in 30.

Rob Bricken
—Rob Bricken

Rob Bricken has ridden the moon worm.

SEND US YOUR...

Letters, artwork, pictures or love to:
Anime Insider
151 Wells Ave.
Congers, NY 10920 or
e-mail to anime-insider@wizardent.com

We reserve the right to edit letters for length, clarity and taste. All art submissions MUST include the character names and YOUR full name and address. Please note that we will not be able to return any artwork or photos.

SHONEN JUMP

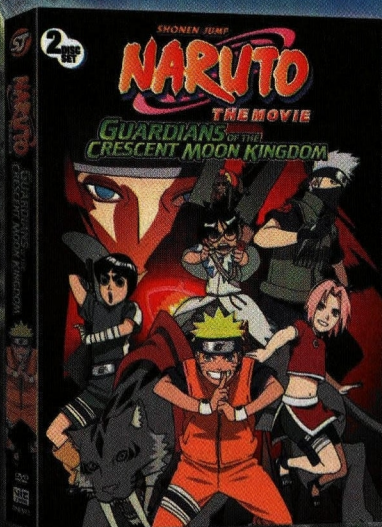
NARUTO

THE MOVIE

GUARDIANS OF THE CRESCENT MOON KINGDOM

Royal Rescue!

Does Naruto
have what it
takes to save an
entire kingdom?



NARUTO The Movie:
Guardians of the Crescent Moon Kingdom
DVD in stores 11.11.08!

*Includes original Japanese movie booklet
(translated version)

Visit naruto.viz.com for online games,
downloads and more!

SHONEN
JUMP
HOME VIDEO



© 2002 MASASHI KISHIMOTO © NMP 2006

viz
media
www.viz.com

CROSSING OVER

American comic creators and characters reach out to Japan



One of fandom's most enduring stereotypes is that anime and manga fans actively loathe American superhero comics, and vice versa. While there is some truth to this little chestnut—ask around and you'll most likely find some people like that—the barrier between these two groups is starting to break down as more and more North American companies take advantage of the stylistic possibilities of anime and manga and work with Japanese creators to give classic comics characters a whole new look; for instance, Marvel Comics recently inked a deal with studio Madhouse to produce four anime TV series starring its extensive stable of spandex-clad superheroes, with Iron Man and Wolverine leading off—but that's not the only recent East-West collaboration.

Both Americans and the Japanese have been co-opting characters and stylistic quirks from each other for years. Spider-man, one of America's most popular superheroes, had both a manga series and a live-action TV series in the 1970s—though they weren't always faithful to the source material. Likewise, American comic and animation companies have tried to capture manga-style visuals and humor in their own works.

Prominent examples include the aforementioned *Teen Titans*, *Avatar: The Last Airbender*, the Marvel Mangaverse comics line and many others. Reception of these titles has been mixed—*Teen Titans* and *Avatar* garnered audiences all their own, but the Mangaverse didn't really catch fire outside of the direct market.

The title that really started the current crossover trend, however, is arguably *The Animatrix*. An anthology of animated stories centered around the Wachowski siblings' *Matrix* trilogy, it involved multiple acclaimed anime directors such as Mahiro Maeda (*Gankutsuou*), Shinichiro Watanabe (*Cowboy Bebop*) and Yoshiaki Kawajiri (*Vampire Hunter D: Bloodlust*) and anime studios 4°C and Madhouse. *The Animatrix* garnered a lot of acclaim for its innovative visual and directorial styles, and from there, the idea of cross-cultural anime would only continue to expand into what it is today.

The first two 12-episode Marvel anime series will star Iron Man and Wolverine, but fans who worry that Marvel has recruited studios to provide animation and nothing more needn't fret; Marvel and Madhouse are working closely alongside each other, accord-

ing to Jungo Maruta, president of Madhouse. Though the anime will be based on famous Marvel characters, the new versions will incorporate cultural and historical aspects of Japan, essentially creating a new Marvel universe.

It's a huge project, so it's not surprising that Marvel and Madhouse are going all-out on this effort. Reportedly, their final goal is to recreate the complete Marvel universe for Japan, which could mean the project could go on indefinitely, considering how many superheroes Marvel has produced in its 79-year history. They're also working out plans for distribution, promotion and merchandising: the four anime series will be available as cell-phone downloads as well as on TV and DVD, and comics based on these series will also be produced. They'll debut on the international satellite TV network Animax, but a U.S. release is inevitable. As the project is only now getting underway, don't expect to see these new Marvel anime in the immediate future: the first series won't debut in Japan until sometime in spring 2010, and no preliminary dates have yet been set for the subsequent series.

Another famed comics figure who's been reaching out to Japan scarcely needs



SUPER-HOT ASSASSIN
Good looking man kills people, no one cares
Page 30



ELVEN MAN DISCOVERED
Returns to civilization after being raised by pixies
Page 64



CAPED CRUSADING *Gotham Knight* led up to the next Bat-sequel but attracted plenty of attention for itself.

an introduction; Stan Lee, the co-creator of such Marvel luminaries as Spider-man, the Fantastic Four, the X-Men and more, has one of the longest and most distinguished careers in the medium. But Lee is not content to remain strictly within the confines of American comics anymore; he's currently involved in no less than three Japanese projects with his production company, Pow! Entertainment.

Perhaps the best known of these is the tentatively titled TV series *Hero Man*, a co-production with studio Bones (*Fullmetal Alchemist*) that follows a young boy who discovers a toy robot that can transform into a towering anime-style giant robot. In addition to this, Lee is also involved in the creation of an animated TV series named *Quartz* alongside studio Gonzo's parent company, GDH. Nothing is known about this mysterious project at the moment, except that it's currently in development. Lee has also had a hand in the manga world as of late: he's currently working with *Shaman King* creator Hiroyuki Takei on the action manga called *Ultimo*, a preview of which ran in the U.S. edition of *Shonen Jump*.

The most notable crossover anime to actually reach completion was released just a few months ago: *Batman: Gotham Knight*. Similarly to *The Animatrix*, *Gotham Knight* was a collection of animated shorts intended as a bridge between *Batman Begins* and *The Dark Knight*, with each short headed up by a different director. Some of the names involved include Toshiyuki Kubooka (*Gunbuster*, *Giant Robo*), Yasuhiro Aoki (*Tweeny Witches*) and Hiroshi Morioka (*Tsubasa* season 2). Critically, the anthology was generally well received among those who reviewed it, but that paled to its commercial reception. It ranked #1 in DVD sales and #2 in Blu-ray sales the week it was released, with the DVD version dethroning the movie it was made to complement. To give you an idea of how significant that is for an anime, only a handful of anime-related titles ever reach any kind

of meaningful rank in overall DVD sales, let alone make it to the top. The power of excellent timing and name recognition are indeed powerful things in the commercial world.

With so many crossover projects coming out, and with Marvel engaged in a long-term project, it seems likely that we're currently witnessing the beginning of a much larger phenomenon. It's possible that these transcontinental efforts will serve to turn both Japanese and American anime fans on to America's extensive comics universe, and vice versa. It will take a while before fans see the final result, but that's just fine—after all,

there's plenty to watch while we wait. ■ Chad Clayton



IRON MAN

TRANSLATION TERRORS

America isn't the only country to take artistic liberties



Now that we've examined the recent trend of American companies hiring anime studios to animate their properties, let's take a quick look at some homegrown Japanese adaptations of American titles. But be forewarned: some of these adaptations are rather wild takes on our treasured pop-culture icons, which will amuse some and horrify others.

SPIDER-MAN

Believe it or not, in the late '70s there was a Japanese *Spider-Man* series, but it was more reminiscent of *Kamen Rider* than the wall-crawler that most of us are familiar with. It was a live-action *sentai* and *tokusatsu* extravaganza that even featured Spidey piloting his own transforming giant robot!

TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES

The quintessential late-'80s cartoon series was made into an anime, with some of the most bizarre results imaginable. *Mutant Turtles: Superman Legend* took the sewer-dwelling ninjas and turned them into a super *sentai* team, complete with transformations and all. To top it all off, Shredder transforms into a metal-plated dragon.

LENSMAN

The 1984 space-opera anime film *SF New Age Lensman* was based upon E. E. Smith's legendary sci-fi novel series *Lensman*, but we use "based upon" in the loosest possible sense. The anime had virtually nothing at all in common with the novels, save for a few minor details.

STARSHIP TROOPERS

While it's hardly a to-the-letter adaptation of Robert A. Heinlein's classic sci-fi novel, this 1988 6-episode OVA series at least makes an attempt to be faithful to the original. Among other things, the anime changed the nationalities of a few of the characters. All things considered, Heinlein got off easy. ■ CC

FORGING FULLMETAL

Studio Bones denies then announces second 'Fullmetal Alchemist' series

One of the year's biggest announcements began with a rumor that could have turned all of anime fandom on its ear: in early July, a purportedly official document from studio Bones was leaked onto the Internet, with details concerning production for sequels to the series *Fullmetal Alchemist* and *Darker Than Black*. In just a few days, the news had spread all over Japanese forums and begun to leak into Western forums and blogs. Fan reactions ranged from skepticism to confusion to sheer ecstasy.

It seemed too good to be true. In a matter of days, Bones president Masahiko Minami publicly declared that the document was forged, and no sequels to either series were in production. Yet oddly enough, Minami did leave the door open by expressing an interest in continuing *Fullmetal Alchemist*, although he was careful to note that no official decisions had been made.

Only a few weeks later, a new *Fullmetal Alchemist* TV series was officially announced in an insert included with the Japanese release of the manga's 20th volume. At this point, no details on the new series have been disclosed; all that's known is that the series is in production. Given that *The Conqueror of Shamballa* provided a fairly conclusive ending to the first series, it seems likely that the new series will not be a sequel but a more manga-faithful remake in the tradition of *Hellsing Ultimate*. But whatever form the new series takes, it's safe to assume that the legions of Elric fans will be ready and waiting to fall in love with them all over again. ■ CC



PLAYING A HAND

Konami and VIZ localize 'Blue Dragon' CCG



Although *Dragon Ball* creator Akira Toriyama has kept a considerably lower profile since ending the series that defined his career, he continues to pop up in unexpected places every once in a while. Most recently, he lent his character design services to the Xbox 360 RPG *Blue Dragon* and its associated anime series. To complete the trilogy of merchandising, Konami Digital Entertainment and VIZ Media are currently in the process of bringing over the *Blue Dragon* collectible card game to play when the TV and Xbox are taken.

In a move that sets it apart from many anime-themed card games, the *Blue Dragon* game will follow a more unique battle system. Its play system will be loosely modeled upon Japanese RPG videogames; players gain experience in order to level up and expand their skill sets through Skill and Command cards. It's a refreshing change, and likely to be intuitive enough for the young audiences *Blue Dragon* is targeted toward.

This venture represents a collaboration of Konami, whose parent company created the original Japanese version of the game, and VIZ Media, which licensed the anime for U.S. distribution. The *Blue Dragon Role-Playing Card Game* will be released into the direct market on November 4, with a full mass-market release on the 9, so get ready to play—if you can bring yourself to hit pause on the console or DVD player, anyway. ■ CC

BLUE DRAGON © BLUE DRAGON PROJECT/TV TOKYO. FULLMETAL ALCHEMIST © HIRONOJI ARAKAWA/SQUARE ENIX

SHONEN JUMP™

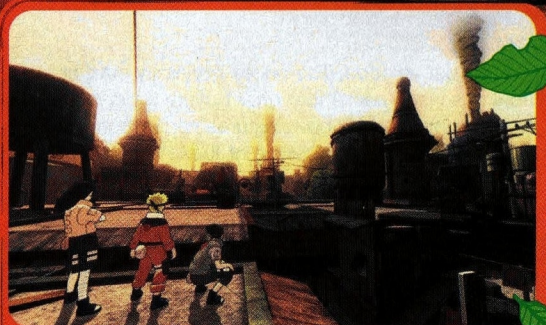
NARUTO

THE BROKEN BOND

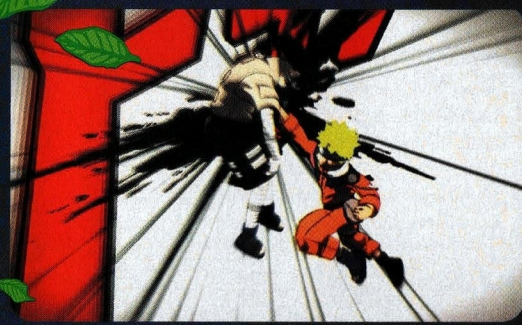
ONLY ON
XBOX 360

Relive the
RIVALRY...

through **BOTH**
of their eyes.



Play as Naruto, Sasuke, and others
in an all-new ACTION ADVENTURE



The ONLY NARUTO game
you can play ONLINE

NOVEMBER 2008

SHONEN
JUMP™
THE WORLD'S MOST POPULAR MANGA

viz
media

NarutoXbox360Game.com

RATING PENDING
RP
CONTENT RATED BY
ESRB

May contain content
inappropriate for children.
Visit www.esrb.org for
rating information.

NARUTO: The Broken Bond video game © 2008 Ubisoft Entertainment. All Rights Reserved. Ubisoft, Ubi.com, and the Ubisoft logo are trademarks of Ubisoft Entertainment in the U.S. and/or other countries. NARUTO artwork and elements © 2002 MASASHI KISHIMOTO. All rights reserved. SHONEN JUMP and NARUTO are trademarks of Shueisha, Inc., in the U.S. and/or other countries. Published and distributed by Ubisoft Entertainment under license from VIZ Media LLC. Microsoft, Xbox, Xbox 360, Xbox LIVE, and the Xbox logos are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies and are used under license from Microsoft.



UBISOFT

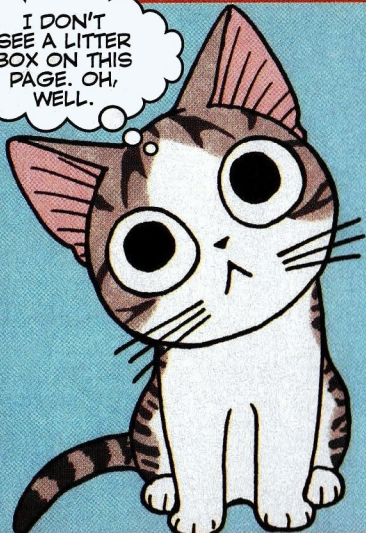
Jump in.

XBOX 360 LIVE

TOPFIVE

What we're into this month

I DON'T SEE A LITTER BOX ON THIS PAGE. OH, WELL.



1 CHI'S SWEET HOME

It's a good thing that the adorableness of kittens is a universal language, because Kanami Kanata's full-color manga and its anime adaptation are still unlicensed for English releases—though we're bribing every company contact we know. In the meantime, we'll keep cooing at every panel.

2 MORIBITO: GUARDIAN OF THE SPIRIT

Adult Swim's latest anime debut has slick anime, beautiful character designs, fierce action and a compelling storyline. What else do we need? Maybe something to keep us awake until it airs? How about...

3 COKE ZERO

It's tough to stay fit when we're hammering away at the latest issue at our desks all day, but this no-calorie version of Coca-Cola helps. Unlike Diet Coke, it actually tastes like the real thing, and slamming one down gives us that extra caffeine boost for deadlines.

4 HIGH SCHOOL DEBUT

A shojo series about a love-seeking teen asking a cool male schoolmate to be her dating coach doesn't scream girl power, but it turns out this comedic romance is both goofily charming and features the strengths of both guys and girls. We're sold.

5 LIGHTSABER DUELS

If only Cartoon Network knew what it was doing when it sent us light-up toy weapons to promote the new *Clone Wars* series. Now, if two editors disagree, they don't argue; they fight to the death. Or at least to the boredom. ■ *The A.I. Staff*

THE LAND OF THE FREE

How to watch legal anime and save your wallet

“Anime: crack is cheaper” has long been a running joke among those who love anime but have trouble paying for it. But as time goes on, this joke may become less and less apt, as companies move to make their anime properties available as free and low-cost online streams and downloads. While the standard-bearer of anime downloads is Apple's iTunes (www.apple.com/itunes), we've decided to highlight some of the many ways to watch anime without breaking the bank—or the law.

YOUTUBE WWW.YOUTUBE.COM

The vast majority of anime content posted on YouTube is pirated, but companies like FUNimation and studio Gonzo have been working to place legal, official anime content on the site. FUNimation has set up its own YouTube channel, and currently streams English-language versions of entire anime series such as *Peach Girl*, *Slayers*, *Blue Gender*, *Mushi-Shi* and others. Gonzo also posted its simultaneous releases of *Blassreiter* and *Tower of Druaga* on YouTube.

CRUNCHYROLL WWW.CRUNCHYROLL.COM

The former pirate haven has gone legit, teamed up with anime studios and now offers one of the longest lists of freely available, legal anime. It was one of the primary hosts of Gonzo's simultaneous digital release of *Blassreiter* and *The Tower of Druaga: The Aegis of Uruk*, and has since obtained many more Gonzo licenses, as well as an extensive list of titles from ADV Films and Media Blasters. Some of the best known of these include *Saiyuki*, *Angelic Layer* and *Kite: Liberator*. While not all of the American anime companies have jumped on board—VIZ, FUNimation and Bandai have all chosen different avenues—Crunchyroll is fast becoming a popular way to see free, legal anime online.

BOST TV WWW.BOSTTV.COM

In addition to being the third distributor of Gonzo's *Blassreiter* and *Tower of Druaga* series, BOST has also become the official producer and distributor of the English-subtitled version of Gonzo's *Strike Witches*. While BOST's episodes can't be downloaded, streaming video can be “rented” for about \$1.99 or less per episode. BOST is notable for hosting a few lesser-known series that aren't legally available anywhere else, such as *Keitai Shoujo* and the touching *Ballad of a Shinigami*.

DIRECT2DRIVE WWW.DIRECT2DRIVE.COM

While IGN's Direct2Drive service isn't free, it's almost as good. The prices generally start at \$1.99 an episode, but some titles are available in season packs that offer buyers a per-episode discount. Its content library recently exploded in size and now features series from VIZ, FUNimation, Toei, Central Park Media and Manga Entertainment. Some of these titles, such as *Fist of the North Star* TV and an English-subtitled *Pretty Cure*, are exclusively available on this site. ■ *Chad Clayton*



BLOSSREITER'S GERD



STRIKE WITCHES

JOIN THE
S.O.S. BRIGADE!

OCTOBER 2008

THE MELANCHOLY
of
AK-ZENES-HURAH

You've seen the anime.
You've danced the dance.
Now read the manga!

Extra-special bonus... read an excerpt of the
novel to be published by Little, Brown Books
for Young Readers in April 2009.



BY THE NUMBERS

45,000 Dollars raised by the Totoro Forest Project in an auction to support the preservation of a forest that helped inspire *My Neighbor Totoro*

32.7 Percent of the North American anime industry market share held by FUNimation in the first half of 2008

20 Million cell phones replaced by tech-conscious Japanese citizens each year

10 Years since the first maid café opened in Japan

3 Years estimated until the next Hayao Miyazaki-helmed film

1 Fashion collection inspired by *The Wallflower* manga, created by designer Julie Haus, that premiered during New York Fashion Week ■ AH

COMING SOON

The latest anime and manga license announcements



KAZE NO STIGMA

DISNEY

Studio Ghibli's *Ponyo on the Cliff by the Sea*, the latest feature-length production from the imagination of Hayao Miyazaki, has been acquired by Disney, which also owns the distribution rights to most of Ghibli's film library, and is slated for a U.S. release sometime in 2009, according to Time magazine.

FUNIMATION

FUNimation announced its license of the studio Gonzo anime *Kaze no Stigma* ("Stigma of the Wind"). The series, adapted from Takahiro Yamato's series of light novels, tells the story of Ayano, the heir to the house of Kannagi, renowned for its skills in the fire arts, and her cousin Kazuma, who was banished from the house after Ayano defeated him. After his banishment, Kazuma acquired the wind arts, setting up a future rivalry.

■ Matt Sukovich

FULL SPIN ZONE

Side stories and sequels we'd read

Monthly Shonen Magazine recently announced that *Beck: Mongolian Chop Squad* creator Harold Sakuishi would publish a 77-page *Beck* spinoff titled "The Last Day of Eddie Lee," set to follow the Dying Breed singer during the hours leading up to his mysterious death. It's nice to see a side character get some extra attention, and we're hoping some of our favorite side characters from different get story spinoffs as well:



RYOGA HIBIKI Ryoga never really flourished in *Ranma 1/2*, as he was constantly weighed down by his competition with Ranma and pursuit of Akane. A tour of his exploits getting lost all over the world would give him time to shine.

PERSISTENCE IS ALL I NEED TO GET AKANE... AND A SPINOFF!



MIYU YAMAZAKI Although bad-girl-turned-good Miyu's delinquent past was occasionally shown throughout the *Gals!* manga, a more complete exploration of her fall and redemption might make for an interesting read.

SQUIRRELS!

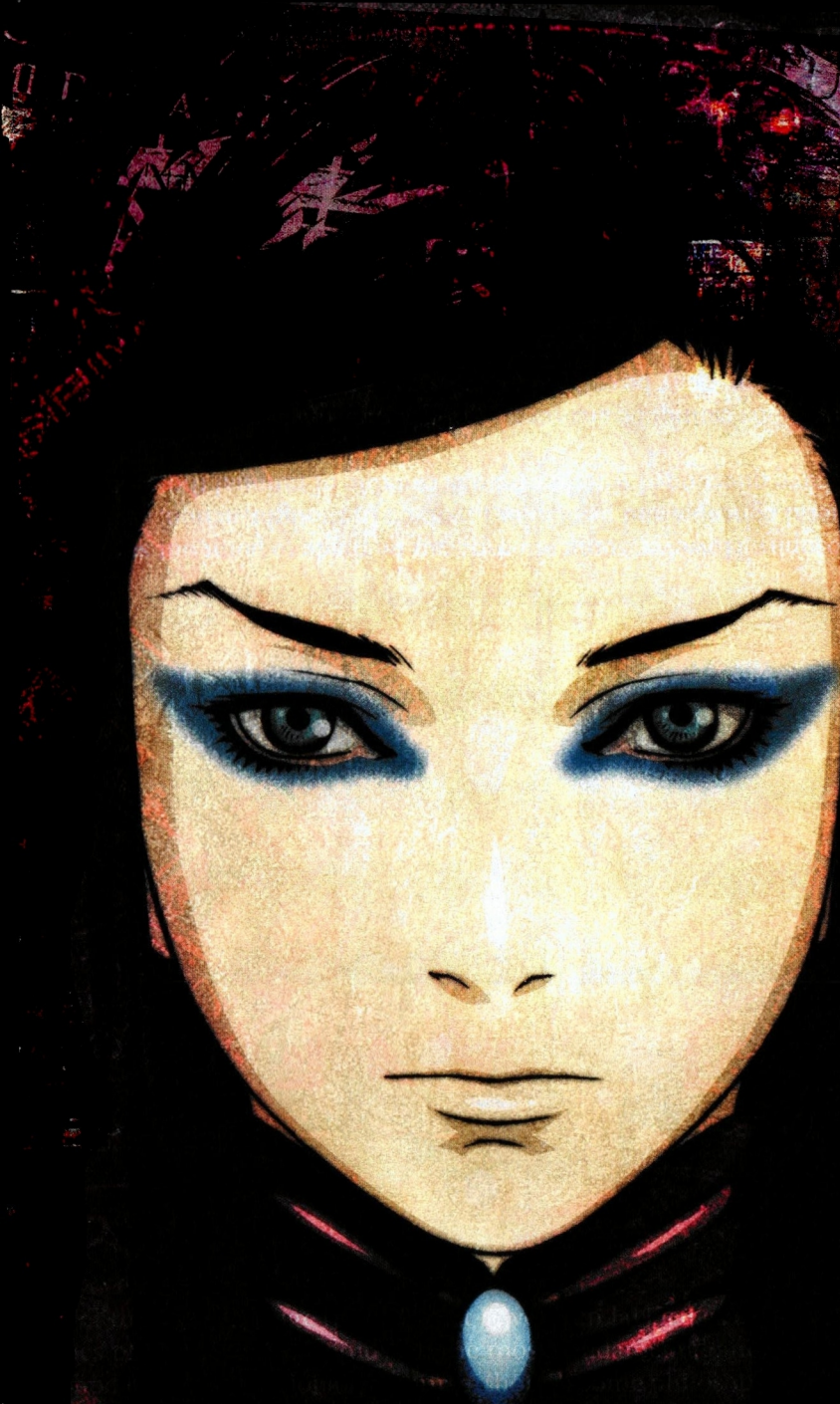


AYUMU "OSAKA" KASUGA *Azumanga Daioh*'s Osaka charmed countless fans with her gentle personality and spacey thoughts. A manga story of her own wouldn't even need a plot—plenty of readers would be content to see her contemplate canned beans and count her eyelashes.



PRESIDENT ARIA It seems ridiculous that we'd suggest a spinoff based around a fat, funny-looking cat—the world already has one Garfield. But *Aria*'s charming, hapless feline boss has a go-getting attitude and inability to speak that should swat down any comparisons. ■ CC

LOOK DEEP INTO MY EYES... YOU'RE GETTING VERY SLEEPY...



THE DOMED CITY OF ROMDO IS
AN IMPENETRABLE WOULD-BE
UTOPIA WHERE HUMANS AND
ROBOTS COEXIST, AND EVERYTHING
IS UNDER COMPLETE GOVERNMENT
CONTROL, OR SO IT APPEARS. RE-L
MAYER FROM THE CIVILIAN
INTELLIGENCE OFFICE, RECEIVES
A FOREBODING MESSAGE THAT
SOMETHING IS GOING TO
"AWAKEN." THAT NIGHT, SHE'S
ATTACKED BY A DEFORMED
SUPER-BEING... AS RE-L
ATTEMPTS TO UNLOCK THIS
SPIRALING MYSTERY, A
METAPHYSICAL BATTLE CRY
LEADS HER TO THE
UNKNOWN OUTSIDE WORLD...

Ergo Proxy

エルゴプロキシ

THE COMPLETE SERIES
CONTAINS EPISODES #001 - #023
AVAILABLE NOW ON DVD



FIND OUT MORE AT FUNIMATION.COM/ERGOPROXY
© MANGA GLOBE / GENEON / GENEON (USA) / WOWOW. Distributed by FUNIMATION® Productions, Ltd. All Rights Reserved.

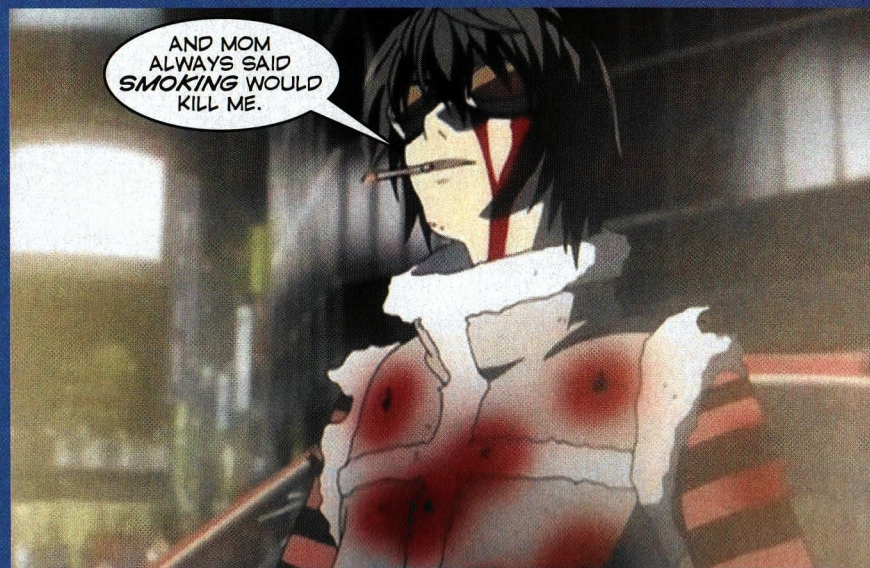
geneon

DISTRIBUTE BY
FUNIMATION
ENTERTAINMENT
AN ANIME FILM COLLECTION

DEATH OF THE MONTH

Matt, 'Death Note'

There are plenty of gruesome demises in *Death Note*, but the last hurrah of Mello-sidekick Matt is a standout because of its absurd quickness—as well as the fact that it was one of the few murders that Kira didn't commit. After the security detail of reporter Kiyomi Takada learns that she has been kidnapped, they figure out that Mello is involved and chase down Matt. After being cornered, Matt casually lights a cigarette and chides them for carrying guns, which is against Japanese law. But even as he expresses confidence that they can't shoot him, the guards blast him into oblivion. — **■ Matt Sukovich**

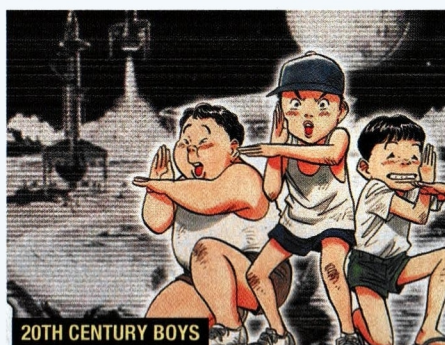


MONA LISA SMILE

Famous painting plays host to '20th Century Boys' press event

When you're as world-famous as the Mona Lisa, you can afford to be choosy about your friends. Getting access to Paris' Louvre museum is a treat on its own—staging a press event at the security-conscious location is just about impossible.

But even so, the people behind the recent live-action movie adaptation of Naoki Urasawa's *20th Century Boys* made it happen and held a small publicity event right alongside Leonardo da Vinci's most famous painting, the Mona Lisa. Lead actors Toshiaki Karasawa and Takako Tokiwa were present along with about 80 members of the press. *20th Century Boys* also brought about another first with its world premiere on the Champs Elysées: it's the first Japanese film to debut in Paris. ■ **CC and AH**



GRATUITOUS FAN SERVICE



■ KAMINA (Gurren Lagann)

Kamina is proof that you can't let anything stand in the way of your goals. This ambitious lad wants to see the mysterious surface of the Earth, and when he finally gets there, he finds that he has to wage battle against beast-driven robots. He can't let wearing a shirt slow him down!

■ YOKO (Gurren Lagann)

Just by looking at her, it's safe to assume that Yoko is one of the sharpest shooters around. You can detect her confidence in her skills from her lack of armor. But who needs that when you're brave enough to lead your village against the vicious Gunmen?



WIZARDWORLD TEXAS

Arlington Convention Center
NOVEMBER 7-9, 2008

SPECIAL SCREENING! DARKER THAN BLACK



SPONSORED BY
FUNIMATION
★ ENTERTAINMENT

SAVE UP TO 20% WHEN YOU
BUY YOUR TICKETS ONLINE!

**DEVIL
MAY CRY
MARATHON!**

WIZARDWORLD.COM

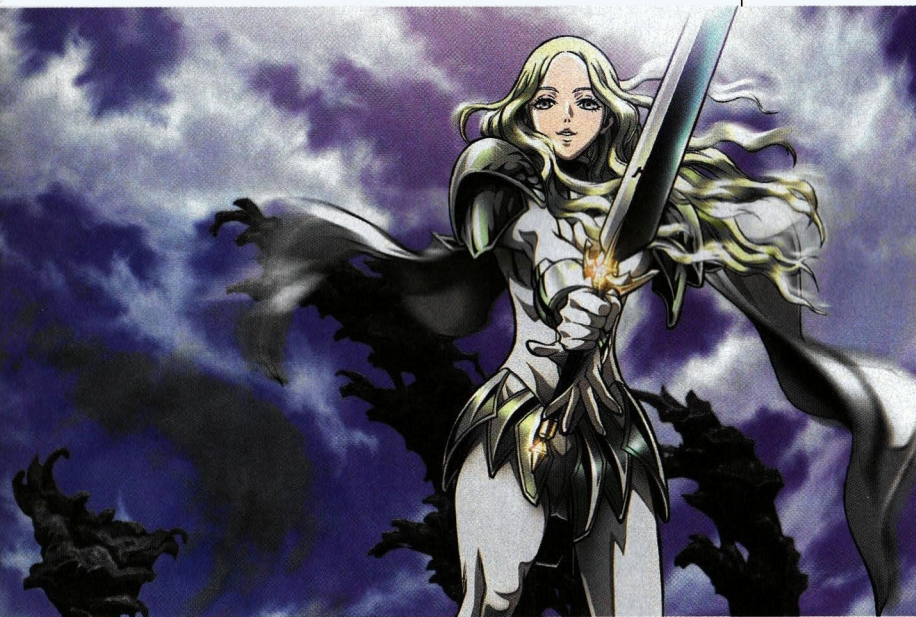
DARKER THAN BLACK: BONES • TENSAI OKAMURA / DTB PRODUCTION COMMITTEE • MBS. DEVIL MAY CRY: 2007 CAPCOM CO., LTD./DMC PRODUCTION COMMITTEE. Budget not subject to change. Additional fees may apply. Supplies may be limited and manufacturers may impose limits. Signings and panels may be limited due to available space and signatures are not guaranteed. Wizard World © 2008 All rights reserved.



5 reasons you'll love **CLAYMORE**

BY MEGHAN GRANT

Imagine a demonic creature who hunts humans to feed on their organs. Not scary enough for you? How about if it can also take the form of different people, impersonating your friends and family by eating their brains and absorbing their memories? In a world of medieval technology and humble villages, nameless female warriors answer the call to slay these evil Yoma. Known to the peasants as Claymores, after the signature weapons they wield, these women are hired to protect, feared as much by their clients as they are by their prey.



TO PROTECT AND SERVE There are many Claymores, a fearsome caste of female warriors who protect civilians from shape-shifting demons called "Yoma."

Arriving this month from FUNimation is *Claymore*, which follows the life of one young soldier, Clare, in her struggle to defeat these beasts, both on the battlefield and in her own heart. While on a mission to uncover a disguised Yoma lurking in a small town, she meets a boy, Raki, whose parents were killed by the demon. Although hardened by combat and the untrusting stares of those she defends, Raki's unyielding attempts to befriend her chip away at her cold exterior. When his neighbors banish him in fear of him transforming next, she hires him as her cook. Now the two travel the country, carrying out orders given by her mysterious overseers. Here are five reasons to join the crusade in *Claymore*.

1. THE DANGER HAS MANY FACES

Going head-to-head with these fiends isn't the most difficult part; finding where—or in who—they're hiding proves just as tricky. Clare's missions entail supernatural detective work, using her demonic senses to unmask Yoma, even if it means going undercover into a holy city forbidden to her. Clare must suspect everyone if she wants to survive, as the Yoma will stop at nothing to outwit Claymores and continue their gruesome feeding frenzy.

2. IT COMES FROM A SHARP PRODUCTION TEAM

The Claymores aren't the only organization hard at work. The series comes to life courtesy of studio Madhouse, led by director Hiroyuki Tanaka, whose past works include *Ninja Scroll* and *Hellsing Ultimate*, with a soundtrack by Masanori Takumi (*Witchblade*). Based on Norihiro Yagi's original manga series, last year *Claymore* suffered a setback as the Japanese anthology in which it was featured closed. It eventually made its way into the pages of the new *Jump Square*.

3. IT'S FILLED WITH BLOODY ACTION

Clare doesn't try to defeat her enemies with the power of love or pink sparkles like the heroines of other anime—she isn't afraid to get dirty while lopping off a few limbs! This Claymore often allows herself to be injured in order to take down her target or stand between a Yoma attack and an ally, having the ability to heal otherwise fatal wounds. With its gory battles, high body count, and gut-snacking monsters, *Claymore* isn't for the faint of heart.

4. SHE FIGHTS FOR A REASON

Under Clare's militant resolve lie emotional wounds that even she can't heal. As a child, she witnessed a warrior named Teresa slay monsters, and empathized with her loneliness; in turn, Teresa grew fond of the little girl. This attachment led her to break a sacred rule against killing humans in order to save Clare. An elite team was sent to execute her, and Teresa was killed along with other Claymores when one of them failed to control her demonic abilities. Determined to exact revenge on the Awakened Being, a

soldier who became a powerful Yoma, Clare now dedicates her life to the organization, having become one of the cursed Claymores herself.

5. AN UNLIKELY FRIENDSHIP FORMS IN A CRUEL WORLD

Inexperienced with a sword, Clare's hired hand Raki isn't that good in a fight, and even his services as a cook aren't that useful, since Claymores don't eat much. Her superiors can't understand why she continues to protect him. Claymores lead doomed lives, bound by destiny to change into the very creatures they fight. But Clare finds an unexpected friend in Raki. He weathers Clare's self-deprecating remarks, waits by her bedside when she's injured and even goes so far as to take a whack at a knight who calls her a demon. Raki's undying faith in Clare's human side proves to be vital to the solitary Claymore, pulling her back from the brink of becoming a Yoma, and giving her a peace of mind she previously wouldn't allow herself to have. **BT**

Freelancer Meghan Grant belongs to a demon-slaying group known as the Nerf Bats.



FATE'S CRUELTY The sad destiny of the Claymores is to become the same demons they are called to destroy.

why overseas
otaku dig

BY ANDREZ BERGEN

LINEBARRELS OF IRON

In the year 2013, middle schooler Kouichi Hayase has a seriously bad day—actually, make that several months. A satellite falls out of the sky and sends him into a coma for six months. Luckily, he recovers, waking up with odd new powers. Three years later, Kouichi's faced with a giant robot that, surprise surprise, he's expected to pilot—along with the lovely Emi Kizaki.



DRIVING FORCE Most people would focus on rehabilitation after awaking from a coma, but Kouichi's got new powers and a new robot to think about instead.

Ask veteran *Pokémon* director, Masamitsu Hidaka, about his involvement helming the brand new Gonzo series, *Linebarrels of Iron*, and his response is as excited as it is free-wheeling. "The story within the original comic consisted of exciting battle scenes and the fascinating stories of each character," he explains. "So, I've placed a special value on those points when creating the animation version. I'm always trying to work out how I can showcase the cool and coquettish mecha battle scenes—both by employing a sharp sense of speed and presence, and by including contemplative action scenes in the animation. And while I'm aiming high for the twin ideals of beautiful and cool, it's still, beneath it all, cute mecha anime! I just hope you enjoy it, and that it's fun for fans to watch."

In most celluloid productions it's the director who dreams, creates the art and has his head in the clouds. The producer is the grounded financier who stabilizes the ship, handles the organizational side of things and sees the big picture a little clearer. He's often also the person who see the production through—from a scrap of note-paper to the screen version. So it seems with *Linebarrels of Iron* series producer, Hiroyuki Birukawa, who has been with this particular anime title since day one.

"I know the chief editor of the monthly magazine, *Champion Red*, published by Akita Shoten here in Japan," Birukawa says. "He and I have known each other for quite a long time, and one day he showed me the latest manga they did—and it was *Linebarrels of Iron*. The moment I saw that sample comic, I knew that this was something I wanted to create as an animation, and asked them for the rights to create it."

Birukawa is quite clearly the man to talk to for a concise explanation of the storyline behind the studio's new series. "The main character, Kouichi Hayase, was an ordinary kid in high school, who was

constantly teased but had a dream of someday becoming a hero," recounts Birukawa. "The first cool point of this anime may be how this character develops through many events, including a parting with good friends, to become a true hero. The second cool point is the mecha action. As you may have seen in the past, all 3-D robot action scenes always had a rectilinear movement, which was quite unreal. The director, Hidaka-san, and I have talked about this quite extensively—and we've gone back to how 2-D robot-action scenes were shown, in order to include that point within our 3-D robot-action scenes for *Linebarrels of Iron*."

Birukawa has more about the new series that he's keen to share. "If you've seen the series trailer, *Linebarrels* strikes a particular pose before stabbing ARMA, the enemy robot. It's like Kabuki, wherein you adopt one pose before you give it movement. We actually call it *tame* in Japanese. We believe *tame* and *kire* [fast action moves after tame] are the most important points when showing cool mecha action. And Hidaka is a pro at robot action. Also luckily for the 3-D action scenes, we have Itano-san [Ichiro Itano, the director of *Blassreiter* and planner of *The Super Dimension Fortress Macross*], who is fantastic at checking these kind of scenes and translating them into action."

Adding to the superlative mecha developments is the teamwork involved in the series structure, scripts, and ideas. "The creative producer, Goro Taniguchi, has so many excellent ideas about the animation he wants to include, while Kiyoko Yoshimura is fantastic at including these, as well as expressing character descriptions in the story."

Despite his professional nature, you can almost see Birukawa blush when it comes to talking up his favorite character. "It's Emi Kizaki," he admits. "She is cute, sexy and also smart! There's a Japanese slang word, *tsundere* [a volatile personality that ends up being good-willed], and she has that perfect *tsundere* factor..." **EW**

Tokyo Correspondent Andrez Bergen is more *tsun* than *dere*.

ATAGLANCE

AIRING: Weekly on TBS, CBC and SUN-TV

DIRECTOR: Masamitsu Hidaka (*Pokémon*, *After War Gundam X*)

ORIGINAL CREATOR: Eiichi Shimizu and Tomohiro Shimoguchi

SERIES STRUCTURE/SCRIPTS: Kiyoko Yoshimura (*Witchblade*)

CREATIVE PRODUCER: Goro Taniguchi (*Code Geass*, *Planetes*)

CHARACTER DESIGN: Hisashi Hirai (*Mobile Suit Gundam Seed*)

MECHA DESIGNS: Tsutomu Suzuki (*Zone of the Enders*)

SPECIAL EFFECTS DIRECTOR: Ichiro Itano (*The Super Dimension Fortress Macross*)

PRODUCER: Hiroyuki Birukawa (*Last Exile*, *Gun x Sword*)

ANIMATION PRODUCTION: Gonzo (*Afro Samurai*, *Blassreiter*)

CAST: Kouichi Hayase: Tetsuya Kakehara (*Simon in Gurren Lagann*);

Emi Kizaki: Mamiko Noto (*Esther Blanchett* in *Trinity Blood*); Hisataka

Kato: Jun Fukuyama (*Tweedledum* in *Kiddy Grade*); Reiji Moritsugu:

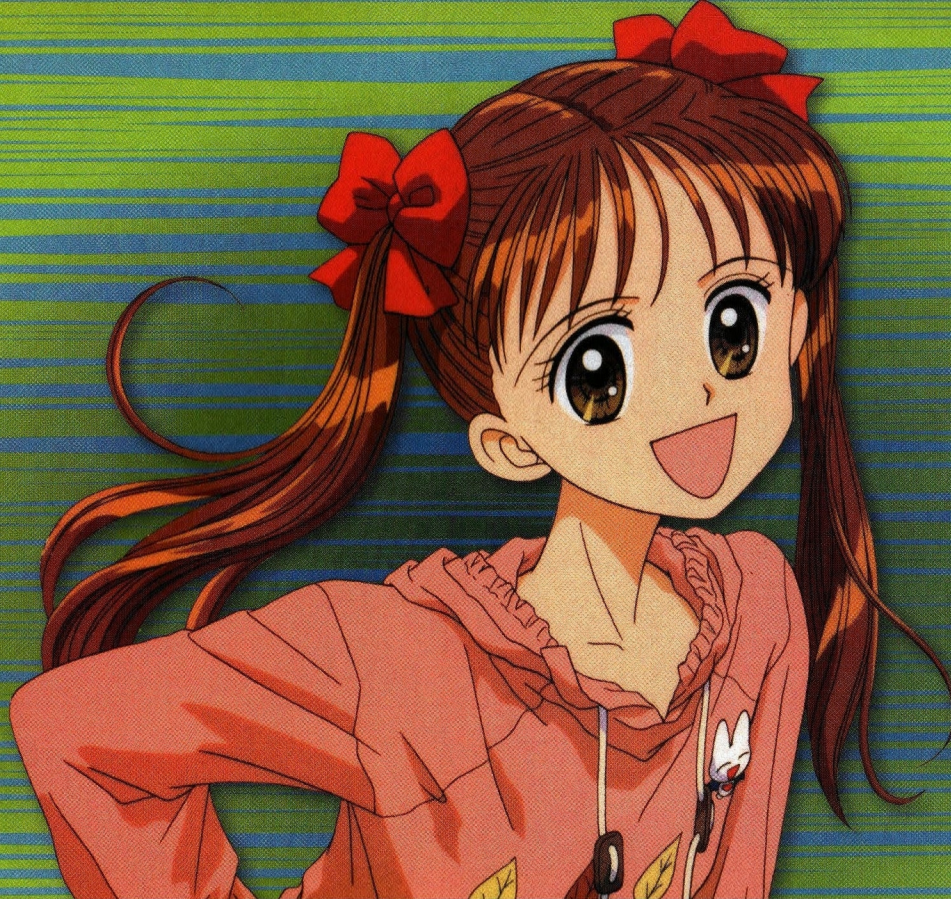
Yuuichi Nakamura (Graham Aker in *Mobile Suit Gundam 00*); Satoru

Yamashita: Miyuki Sawashiro (*Mint Blancmanche* in *Galaxy Angel*);

Shizuna Endo: Kana Ueda (*Stekkin* in *Pumpkin Scissors*); Izuna Endo:

Rie Kugimiya (*Alphonse Elric* in *Fullmetal Alchemist*)





▲ **SANA
KURATA**
Kodocha

VS.

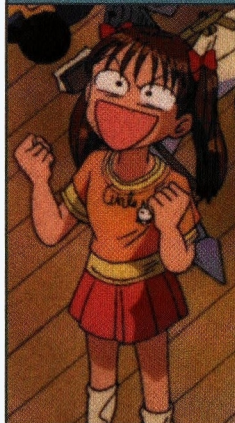
▼ **MITSUKI
KOYAMA**
Full Moon



lastman standing

激戦爆発

BY JOE CHAN

SANA KURATA		MITSUKI KOYAMA	
	Employs a pimp	DARK SECRET	Dying of cancer
	Rei and Akito	GROUPIES	Meroko and Takuto
	Rapping	SPECIAL TALENT	Singing
	11	AGE	12 and 16
	To find her birth mother	LIFE GOAL	To find Eiichi
Adopted and raised by an odd novelist, Sana became famous so her real mother can find her. She leads a double life as a student and as the star of the variety show <i>Kodocha</i> , and deals with both growing pains and the trials of show business.		Mitsuki yearns to become a singer, a dream threatened by the onset of throat cancer. Two supernatural supporters give her one last chance to live it by turning her into the 16-year-old "Full Moon," but she knows soon she'll have to give in to her fate.	

THE BATTLE BEGINS

Spotlights focus to the side of the stage, where the emcee waits to announce the next act. "While the judges tally up their scores, let's introduce the next performer for the Komawari Middle School Talent Show! Here to perform "Eternal Snow," a song first made famous by her late father, is 12-year-old Mitsuki Ko—huh?"

As attention shifts to the opposite end of the stage, there is a puzzled murmur from the audience. The young, demure blonde emerging under the stage lights seems a lot older than they were expecting. The emcee waves the girl over and hesitatingly asks, "You're Mitsuki Koyama, right? But it says here you're 12..."

The girl flashes a charming smile and simply answers, "It's amazing what you can do with a little make-up and a wig, isn't it Mr. Emcee? While I'm like this, you can call me Full Moon."

"Right," the emcee continues, albeit with a little hesitation, "as I was saying, here's Mitsuki Koyama, as Full Moon, performing Eternal Snow!"

Full Moon flits back towards center stage, as the opening strains to Eternal Snow begin playing. Her mature throaty voice enraptures the audience, stunning them into silence. At least, until an unexpected accompaniment invades the stage.

"Wait, wait, waaiiit!" a shrill, piercing voice cries out from stage left. Following the shout is the living Doppler Effect, Sana Kurata, who had performed a rather unorthodox stand-up routine earlier in the evening. "Stop the press! Stop the bus! Stop world hunger! There is no way no how no what this girl is 12! I call foul! Discombobulation! She's a cheat!"

Sana skids to a halt, poised with her right finger pointed right at Mitsuki's nose as she pauses to take a deep breath; in her left hand is her Babbit beat-box with a tiny rhythm already emanating from its tiny speaker. Without warning, Sana launches into an ad-libbed rap:

*"Singing signing smiling lying
I'm so totally not buying
that this girl is really twelve!"*

*Singing signing smiling lying
Now's the time to be trying
to get the truth from this her... uhh... selve!*
Well, what do you have to say?"

Mitsuki barely has time to recover from the sudden interruption before the microphone is shoved into her face. With total incomprehension she tilts her head and says, "Umm...no way?"

Sana clutches her chest and reels back as if struck, "Aaargh, you got me! You're better than I thought!" She stomps her foot and crosses her arms, frowning at this unexpected challenge, "Fine! Best out of three! This time you start!"

Mitsuki stammers, still unsure of what's going on, or who this spastic challenger is, "Excuse me, but who—"

"Oh! Sorry, time's up! That's my point," Sana smugly proclaims, "Onto the final round!"

THE WINNAH

Sana stands squarely in front of Mitsuki and assaults her nose once again with an accusatory pointing finger, "You still have to prove you're really 12!" She braces her hands on her hips and stares at Mitsuki expectantly.

"Okay," says Mitsuki after a moment, "I can prove it to you. Watch this!" With a subtle flick of her hand and the plea, "Onegai! Taruto!" the tall and blonde Full Moon disappears in a shower of twinkling sparkles, and a young brunette emerges from the magical light show.

Sana stares at Mitsuki—the real Mitsuki—with mouth agape. The microphone drops from her limp hand, the crash and resulting feedback snapping the rest of the audience out of a similar state of shock. "Tha—that's not fair! She's a magical girl? How come I can't be a magical girl? I want to talk to my agent! My manager! Mama!"

Stagehands escort the hysterical girl off the stage, leaving Mitsuki shrugging at the audience.

ai

Have an idea for an anime match-up? Let us know at anime-insider@wizardsent.com!

FIGHTING SPIRIT

BY ROB BRICKEN

THE A TO Z OF 'MORIBITO: GUARDIAN OF THE SPIRIT'

Chagum has lost everything. Once the second prince of Yogo, he's now on the run—hunted by minions of his father the Emperor, who wants him dead. But worst of all, he carries a water spirit inside of him that could destroy his entire kingdom. Suffice it to say, Chagum's having a rough month.

But there are two things that should give Chagum comfort: 1) his bodyguard is Balsa, a formidable spear fighter who's taken a vow to never kill, and 2) he's one of the stars of *Moribito: Guardian of the Spirit*, the newest anime hit on Adult Swim. Created by Production I.G and licensed by Media Blasters, *Guardian* is an epic fantasy about Chagum and Balsa's adventures, based on Nahoko Uehashi's best-selling young adult book series.

The show debuted on Adult Swim in August, but now Chagum and Balsa's real troubles are about to begin. It seemed like a perfect time for *Anime Insider* to get new fans prepped with an A to Z of everything you need to know about *Moribito*—and tell the current fans what they want to know about the show's upcoming secrets. Consider this your **SPOILER WARNING**—because no spear's going to guard you from what happens next.

A IS FOR AOGIRI

The Aogiri mountains are where Balsa devises a plan to escape from the Emperor's hunters permanently. In full view of the hunters, Balsa and Chagum are forced down the mountain by a gigantic wolf, seemingly to their certain deaths. In reality, the wolf belongs to Torogai, who helps the pair fake their deaths. With the hunters off their trail, Balsa and Chagum have some time to rest.

B IS FOR BALSA

Very little is known about the spear-wielding heroine of *Moribito*, Balsa—her past, how she got her skills with her spear and, most importantly, her oath to save eight lives. Although Balsa has told the young prince Chagum that she must save those lives after taking eight lives at some point in her past, when, how and why is still a mystery. Still, Balsa's refusal to kill seems absolute, even when her opponents—mostly the secret hunters hired by the Emperor to kill Chagum—are determined to kill her.

C IS FOR CHAGUM

Although Chagum is the second son of the Emperor of Yogo, his life stops being good when it's discovered an evil water spirit has formed inside of him, one which will curse the land of Yogo with severe drought unless it—and thus Chagum—is destroyed. The Emperor secretly orders that Chagum be killed, but Chagum's mother Ni-no-niseki helps Chagum escape, hiring Balsa to protect the young prince.

D IS FOR DROUGHT SIGN

This mysterious sign comes to the Emperor diviners, who foretell that if Chagum is not killed, the evil water spirit inside will bring drought and destruction to the land. After Balsa and Chagum's fake death, Chagum's tutor Shuga realizes the Drought Sign has not disappeared.





L IS FOR LA LUNGA

This spirit has yet to appear in *Moribito*, but suffice to say, it means “the Egg Eater”—and it’s very, very bad news for Chagum.

M IS FOR MIKADO

Mikado is the name of Chagum’s father, the Emperor of Yogo. Although he orders Chagum to be killed, he’s not an evil man—he’s just willing to sacrifice his second son for the good of the country.

N IS FOR NAYUG

The spirit world lies alongside the human world and is connected to it in many ways. The spirit known as the Nyunga actually creates water in both Nayug and the human world, and it is the one who placed the spirit inside Chagum.

O IS FOR OPENING THEME

Yes, the legendary L’Arc-en-Ciel performed “Shine” for the series’ opening. Oddly, although the series was released in early 2007, a single of “Shine” was only released this past August.

P IS FOR PRODUCTION I.G

If you’re wondering why *Moribito* looks so darned good, wonder no longer—it was animated by Production I.G. Using a great deal of his former *Ghost in the Shell: Stand Alone Complex* animation team, Kenji Kamiyama directed the series.

R IS FOR RADIO

The *Moribito* book series is so popular in Japan, it not only had an anime, but also a radio show on NHK-FM. *Moribito* had a 10-part radio drama in 2006—before the anime—while the second book, *Guardian of the Dark*, got a series in 2007.

S IS FOR SHUGA

Shuga was Chagum’s tutor as well as the youngest of the Emperor’s diviners. Although he seems sketchy, he does appear to care about Chagum. When he realizes that the Drought Sign hasn’t disappeared after Chagum’s “death,” he researches the sign and the water spirit possessing his former pupil. They’re both tied into the history of Yogo itself—and what he finds will change everything.

T IS FOR TANDA

This traveling medicine man is one of Balsa’s friends, and usually helps patch her up after her battles. Taught by the shamaness Torogai, Tanda cares more for Balsa than the normal doctor-patient relationship, but does Balsa return his affection?

U IS FOR UEHASHI

Nahoko Uehashi is the author of the 10-part *Moribito* series, and one of the best-selling children’s book writers in Japan. She’s won several awards for both the *Moribito* series and her other fantasy books, and is a college professor, too!

ai

Rob Bricken is the Guardian of the Scotch, but he's incredibly bad at it.

E IS FOR EGG

The wise shamaness Torogai reveals that the water spirit inside Chagum has taken the form of an egg—specifically, it’s an egg of the Nyunga Ro Im, evil water spirits who live in the mystical world of Nayug. The egg cannot be removed until it hatches, but the hatching will have consequences—not just for Yogo, but for Chagum as well.

G IS FOR GENEON

At the 2007 Tokyo Anime Fair, Geneon Entertainment USA held a press conference to announce that it has the American license to the series, which would also be airing on Adult Swim. As we all know, Geneon imploded, leaving the rights in limbo...until Media Blasters announced it had saved the rights in March 2008.

H IS FOR HUNTERS

Not wanting to seem cruel in front of his people, the Emperor secretly orders that Chagum be killed for the good of Yogo. When Chagum escapes, the Emperor commands four hunters—Mon, Jin, Zen and Yun—to hunt down his son and make sure he’s dead. Although they currently believe both Chagum and Balsa were killed on Aogiri Mountain, their story is not yet over.

J IS FOR JIGURO

Balsa’s former master and bodyguard, he’s the one who gave her the spear she always carries. Although Jiguro’s story won’t be truly revealed until episode 21, you can be certain he’s involved with Balsa’s oath to save eight lives.

K IS FOR KANBAL

This small country is where Balsa hails from. It lies on the other side of the Aogiri mountains, and lacks Yogo’s ricefields and verdant farmlands; instead it’s very craggy, so the people mostly herd goats, although a small amount of farming goes on.

BALSA (L) AND CHAGUM

AFTER ID



DARK

THE REMORSELESS KILLERS OF
'DARKER THAN BLACK'—AND
WHY THEY'RE THE GOOD GUYS

BY ROB BRICKEN

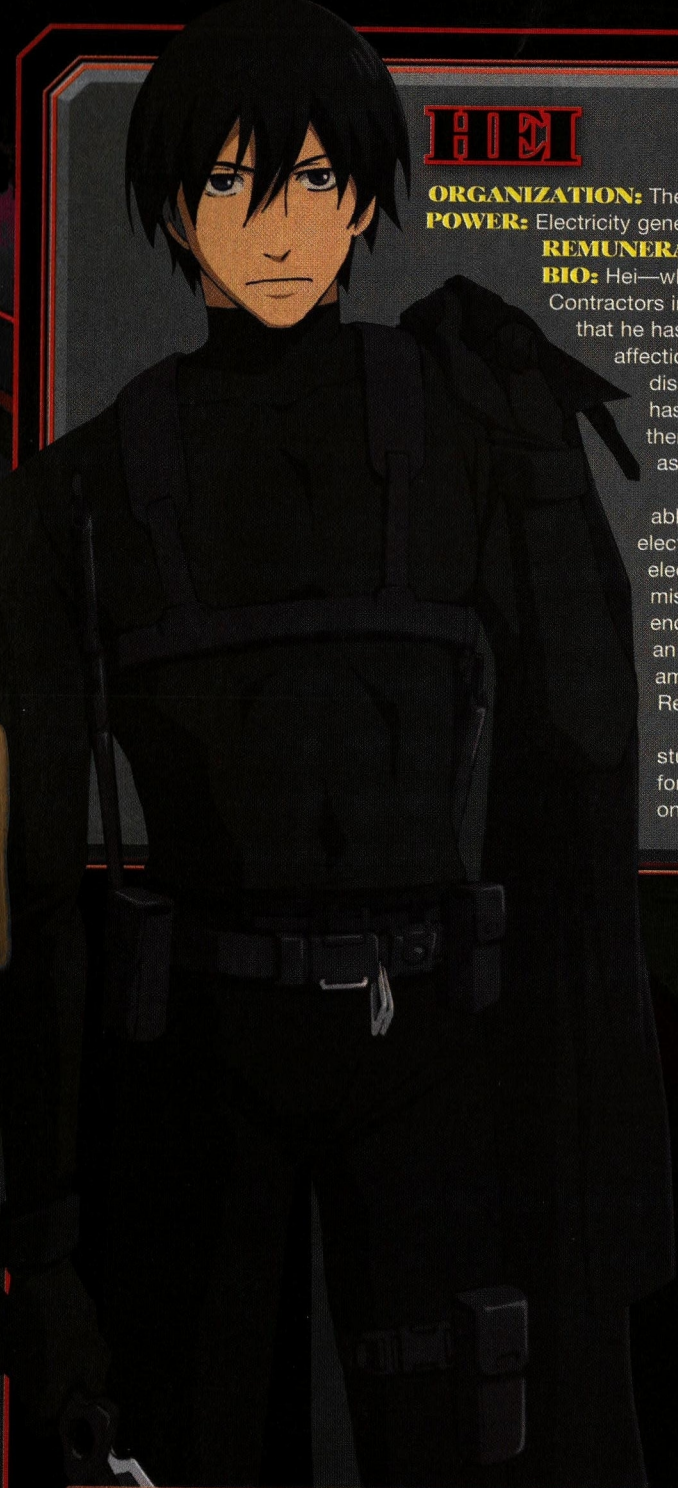


Hate. Fear. Love. Anger. Hei is one of the Contractors, a group of people who can't feel any of those things. It's not because they don't want to, but because the Contractors are the mysterious humans who gained bizarre powers (with even more bizarre prices) after the appearance of Hell's Gate in Japan 10 years ago, which obscured the night sky and replaced it with new stars. Each star is tied to one of the Contractors, who nowadays, thanks to their generally emotionless states and supernatural powers, are used as spies and assassins by governments, crime organizations and other groups around the world. However, each time a Contractor uses his powers, he has to pay a price—a Remuneration—which can be anything, from drinking milk to breaking his own fingers.

Although Hei works as a killer for a secret organization known

only as the Syndicate, his primary goal is to find out what happened to his sister Bai, who vanished five years ago along with Heaven's Gate in South America. But while he searches for answers, the Tokyo police are searching for him—along with a horde of equally deadly Contractors—and a few surprises from Hei's own mysterious past.

If the series sounds dark, well, keep in mind that it's called *Darker Than Black* for a reason. The show is already a cult favorite in Japan and eagerly awaited by American anime fans, not least because it was created and animated by studio Bones (*Fullmetal Alchemist*), directed by Tensai Okamura (*Wolf's Rain*) and has music by Yoko Kanno (*Cowboy Bebop*). FUNimation will release the first U.S. DVD on November 25, but you'll need this guide to the series' many characters right now in order to see into this darkness.



HEI

ORGANIZATION: The Syndicate

POWER: Electricity generation

REMUNERATION: None

BIO: Hei—whose codename means “black” in Chinese—is unique among Contractors in that he has no payment to make for his power. He’s also unique in that he has emotions, unlike all other Contractors. This is most evident in his affection for his sister Bai, who disappeared several years ago following the disappearance of Heaven’s Gate in South America, and for whom Hei has been searching ever since. Hei’s desires—and his ability to act upon them—make him a puzzle to his fellow Contractors, and a potential danger as well.

Hei can generate enough electricity to kill and short out most reasonably sized electrical grids, but unless he’s directly touching an object, the electricity he creates must transfer through material that normally conducts electricity, like water or metal. Hei wears a bulletproof trenchcoat on his missions, and brings only a knife with him—although the knife is at the end of a metal wire, through which Hei can send his electricity. Hei was an assassin even before receiving his Contractor power, giving him an amazing set of killing skills that have earned him the nickname “the Black Reaper” among his fellow Contractors.

Hei is currently living in Japan under the guise of a Chinese exchange student named Lee Shengshun in a nondescript apartment, while performing assassinations for the Syndicate. His landlord and fellow tenants only know that “Lee” has a part-time job.

MISAKI

ORGANIZATION: Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department

POWER: None

REMUNERATION: None

BIO: The prim but beautiful Misaki Kirihara is the section chief of the Tokyo police’s Section 4, which handles foreign affairs in general and secretly investigates Contractor affairs. She’s personally obsessed with discovering the identity of the Contractor known as the Black Reaper, since he’s so successful, and uses her team to investigate murders in which she believes him to have been involved. Despite her slim figure, she constantly munches on junk food.





Devil May Cry

THE ANIMATED SERIES

THE WAIT IS OVER.
VOLUMES 1-3 AVAILABLE NOW ON DVD

FUNIMATION.COM/DEVILMAYCRY

Devil May Cry © 2007 CAPCOM CO., LTD. / DMC Committee. Licensed by FUNimation® Productions, Ltd. All Rights Reserved.


Showgate


FUNIMATION
★ ENTERTAINMENT
A NAMER'S CORPORATION COMPANY

BLACK TO BASICS

THE TERMINOLOGY YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE GOING 'BLACK'



CONTRACTOR: These special humans have all been granted special powers, but at two costs: their emotions, and their personal Remuneration (see below). Because they have no feelings, including pity or guilt, they are frequently employed as spies or assassins. The regular population does not know they exist.

DOLL: These humans are much like Contractors in that they are virtually emotionless and have special powers, which usually manifest as an ability to send their consciousness through a certain substance and sense things. They can be implanted with both personalities and memories.

HEAVEN'S GATE: A mysterious, circular area that appeared in South America 10 years ago; what was inside it is unknown. When it appeared, the night sky disappeared, filled with a new set of stars. Five years ago, Heaven's Gate disappeared along with several thousand people.

HELL'S GATE:—Like Heaven's Gate, this spherical area is in Tokyo, and appeared 10 years ago. A giant wall was built around it to keep the populace away, and several research sites have been investigating the area.

MORATORIUM: These people are half-Contractors; they have special powers, but have no control over them, and do not need to pay a Remuneration. They lose consciousness whenever they use their powers, which is usually a very traumatic incident for them.

REMUNERATION: Every Contractor must pay a Remuneration after using his or her powers; this is a psychological need which cannot be stopped or resisted. It can take almost any form, from drinking milk, to singing a certain song, to kissing someone, to drinking the blood of children. ■ RB

HUANG



ORGANIZATION:

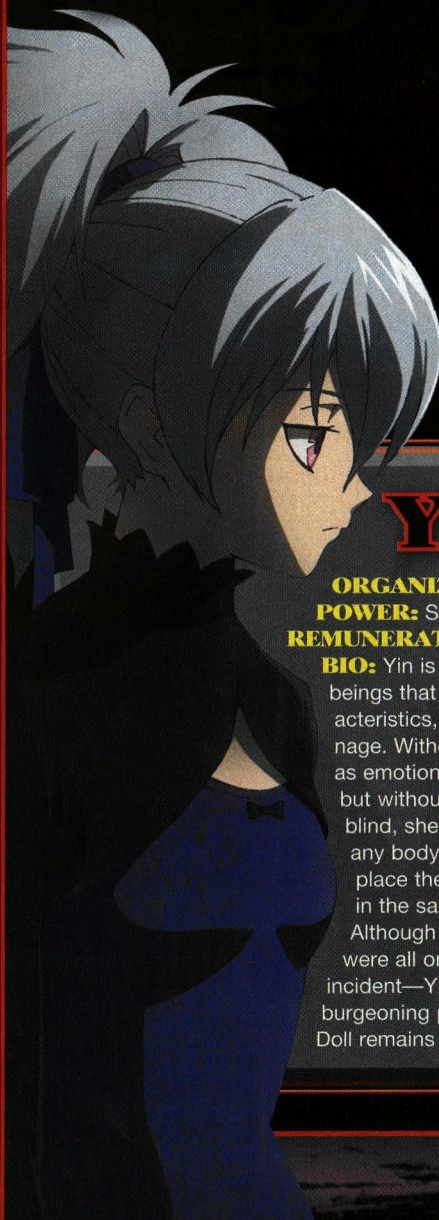
The Syndicate

POWER: N/A

REMUNERATION: N/A

BIO: The leader of Hei's team, Huang is a regular human, although one with an incredible strategic mind. He coordinates the team during its assignments and acts as the middleman between them and the Syndicate, passing along orders. A former policeman, Huang once witnessed a Contractor in action; the Syndicate then forced him to join the organization. As such, Huang despises both Contractors and Dolls, and has no problem letting Hei, Yin or anyone else know it. Although Huang generally pre-

fers to command the team remotely, he's able to provide physical backup when Hei needs it—usually in the form of devastatingly heavy weaponry.



YIN

ORGANIZATION: The Syndicate

POWER: Surveillance via water

REMUNERATION: N/A

BIO: Yin is the Doll in Hei's team. Dolls are humanoid beings that can be imprinted with any memories and characteristics, making them perfect for infiltration and espionage. Without these external personalities, Dolls are just as emotionless as Contractors and have certain powers, but without the need for Remuneration. Although Yin is blind, she has the ability to channel her senses through any body of water, allowing her "see" and hear along any place the water runs; this also allows her to track targets in the same way, provided they stay near the water. Although Dolls are essentially devoid of personality, they were all once regular humans before the Heaven's Gate incident—Yin was a young Finnish girl named Kirsi and a burgeoning piano prodigy. Just how she transformed into a Doll remains unknown.

MAO



ORGANIZATION: The Syndicate

POWER: Animal possession

REMUNERATION: N/A

BIO: Mao is a cat. Actually, Mao is a former Contractor who mysteriously paid off his Contract; this allows him to use his power without a Remuneration, but required a massive sacrifice—namely, his body, which was destroyed and left his mind in the body of a cat. Coincidentally, Mao's power is the ability to possess other animals for short periods of time. Like regular Contractors, Mao is still very cold and emotionless. His brain is hooked wirelessly to the Internet, which allows him to send and receive data no matter his location, as well as keeping him thinking in human terms (without which he'd regress into the mentality of an actual cat). Mao's size, agility and unassuming appearance make him uniquely suited for creating distractions, on which Hei frequently capitalizes.

MAI



ORGANIZATION: None

POWER: Pyrokinesis

REMUNERATION: Humming

BIO: To say that Mai's life is difficult would be an understatement. She's the daughter of Kozo Tahara, the only survivor of the first expedition into Hell's Gate. Mai and her father's relationship is strained to say the least, so much so that Mai has taken her mother's last name, Kashiwagi, and the two barely talk—the primary reason for which is because Tahara has been using seeds taken from Hell's Gate to suppress her fire-generating Contractor powers. This has caused Mai to transform into a Moratorium—a Contractor who cannot control his or her powers, and suffers mentally as a result—although they don't have to pay their Remuneration when using their powers this way.

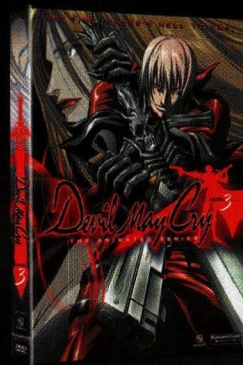


Devil May Cry

THE ANIMATED SERIES

READY TO PLAY WITH THE DEVIL?

VOLUMES 1-3
AVAILABLE NOW ON DVD



FUNIMATION.COM/DEVILMAYCRY

Devil May Cry © 2007 CAPCOM CO., LTD. / DMG. All Rights Reserved.
Licensed by FUNIMATION® Productions, Ltd. All Rights Reserved.



hastings

RightSw.com

amazon.com

fray's

SEACENT

fye

Showgate

FUNIMATION
ENTERTAINMENT
A HARVEY CORPORATION COMPANY

CONTRACT PLAYERS

OTHER ANIME STARS WHO ARE CLEARLY CONTRACTORS IN DISGUISE

VASH THE STAMPEDE: His power is his supernatural aiming ability, which allows him to shoot any target, no matter how far away it is—he can even shoot moving bullets out of the air. His price is eating all those donuts, which explains why he's constantly scarfing them down.

RORONOA ZOLO: Zolo's got the amazing sword skills, but after every fight, he's got to take a nap on the deck on the *Going Merry*. Otherwise, he gets mighty grouchy.

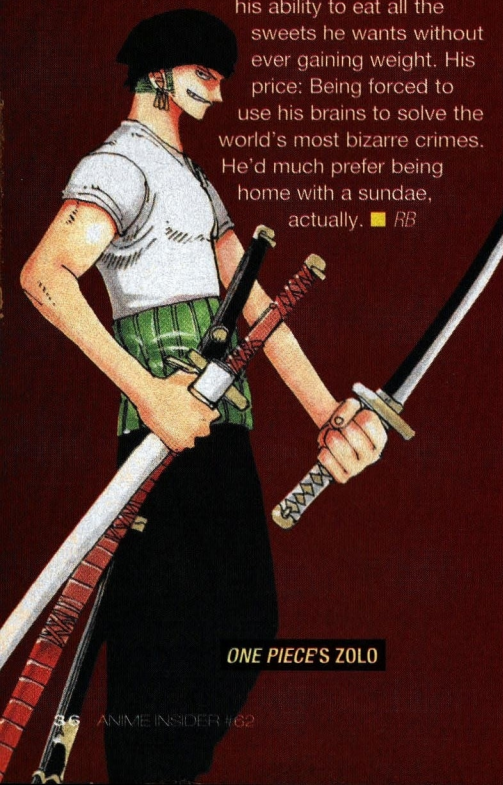
HARUHI SUZUMIYA—Haruhi's reality-warping powers come at a steep price for everyone around her; every time she uses it, she has to boss someone around mercilessly. Since Haruhi's so bossy anyways, this doesn't bother her a bit.

LELOUCH LAMPEROUGE: The power of Geass is, of course, another secret Contractor power. Sure, he can order people around, but every time he does, he has to sneeze inside his Zero mask. This happens off-screen, but man, it's disgusting.

KAMINA: His power is being awesome, and the price he pays is doing something tremendously stupid. This explains why he's constantly being awesome and doing something stupid.

NARUTO UZUMAKI: Think that using the power of the fox spirit's chakra doesn't have a price? He can use it whenever he wants, but he has to say "Believe it!" 37 times every day for the rest of his natural life. Believe it.

L: It's not L's smarts that are his power—it's his ability to eat all the sweets he wants without ever gaining weight. His price: Being forced to use his brains to solve the world's most bizarre crimes. He'd much prefer being home with a sundae, actually. ■ RB



ONE PIECE'S ZOLO

HAVOC



ORGANIZATION: None

POWER: Unknown

REMUNERATION: Drinking children's blood

BIO: Havoc was formerly the most dangerous, feared Contractor in the entire world, and not only because of her terrifying Remuneration. Without the slightest hint of pity or regret, she was a merciless, incredibly effective assassin, rumored to have killed more than 100,000 people in South America prior to the Heaven's Gate disappearance. She did work with Hei in some capacity, although how and when is unknown. When the Gate disappeared, Havoc lost both her powers and most of her memories. She is hunted by many agencies, including MI6, for her bloody past.

NOVEMBER 11

ORGANIZATION: MI6

POWER: Ice generation

REMUNERATION: Smoking

BIO: A member of England's secret service, the agent codenamed November 11 is a Contractor who has been sent to Japan to investigate the "Black Reaper," among other, more sinister missions. November is very polite and proper, and actually hates smokers and smoking, so he's eternally aggravated by his Remuneration, which forces him to smoke after manipulating and freezing water. This ability allows him to create deadly ice projectiles or even shields made out of ice, assuming there's enough water nearby. November is the leader of MI6's Japan team, which includes the Contractor April, who creates rainstorms (a very useful ability for the water-manipulating November) and the Doll July, who can sense through glass. November uses the alias Jack Simon while in Japan, and begins a friendship with Section 4 chief Misaki Kirihara in order to get more information about the Black Reaper.





BERTHA

ORGANIZATION: FSB

POWER: Sonic manipulation

REMUNERATION: Chewing and spitting things up

BIO: FSB stands for Federal'naya Sluzhba Bezopasnosti, better known as Russia's equivalent of the Secret Service. Bertha is an enormous woman, but her huge frame houses an equally huge voice—she was actually an opera singer prior to becoming a Contractor. Now she can control her voice to destroy almost anything by modulating it to match something's resonance, which can shatter objects or stop things from working...like someone's internal organs. Her odd Remuneration forces her to put objects in her mouth—rarely something normal like food—chew them, then spit them out. Bertha is assisted by the seemingly meek Contractor Itzhak, who can capture the traveling spirits of Dolls.

AMBER

ORGANIZATION: Evening Primrose

POWER: Time manipulation

REMUNERATION: Reverse aging

BIO: Amber is the very first Contractor, and was once both employed by MI6 (with the codename February) and the Syndicate before creating her own organization, Evening Primrose. Her power is immense, allowing her to stop time while still moving around herself—she can even bring others with her—or actually rewind time. This allows her to effectively predict the future, making her virtually impossible to surprise. However, since her Remuneration means she's getting younger, she can only use her powers to a certain extent, or she will turn into a child. Although a Contractor, Amber had very strong feelings for Hei, whom she worked with in South America in the past. Unfortunately, Amber went missing along with Hei's sister Bai when Heaven's Gate disappeared.



WEI

ORGANIZATION: Chen Long Tang

POWER: Acidic blood

REMUNERATION: Bleeding

BIO: Although the Contractor Wei Zhijun has wacky elf ears (with no explanation given for them), there's nothing funny about this stone-cold killer. Wei cuts his own arm to cover his target with his blood, which gruesomely dissolves them; by using this method, Wei immediately makes his Remuneration for using his gift, although his arm is covered in scars as a result. He is the bodyguard of Alice Wang, the daughter of the head of the Chen Long Tang, a Hong Kong mafia family that has been under attack by a mysterious killer for some time.

ai

Rob Bricken has the power to forget virtually anything, but must drink scotch to do so.

THE MONSTER MAKER

Master of Yokai manga Shigeru Mizuki discusses the importance of the spiritual world and how it is disappearing

By Carolyn Fowlkes | Interview by Mie Ikeda

The west has unicorns, fairies, giants and dragons. The east has cucumber-loving water demons, tricky foxes who disguise themselves as beautiful maidens, giant cats who devour family members to take their place and ghostly maidens who appear naked in the snow.

These are just some of the creatures known as "Yokai" that exist in Japanese folklore and mythology. These strange, frightening and wonderful monsters are neither good nor bad as a class—some help mortals, some kill them, some are indifferent—and they're just one of the groups of monsters, spirits and deities that inhabit the Japanese mythological consciousness.

The enduring popularity of yokai in the Japanese media today is largely thanks to manga artist Shigeru Mizuki, considered a master of stories about Yokai. After serving in the Imperial Japanese Army in World War II, Mizuki returned home to set his pen and his imagination to dark tales about monsters and ghouls—tales such as *Hakaba Kitaro* ("Graveyard Kitaro"), a 1959

manga about a Yokai boy forced to act as a go-between for the world of spirits and world of mortals. *Kitaro* spawned TV series, movies and videogames and breathed new life into the legend of Yokai. Its popularity has lasted so long that some of today's stars of anime—like Shoko Nakagawa—grew up with the series. In fact, the latest anime adaptation of Mizuki's series started airing last January in Japan!

Even at 86, Mizuki is hard at work. His new manga series, *Tono Monogatari*, debuted this summer, while his recently completed woodblock series, "53 Stations of the Yokaido Road," which is a Yokai-filled re-imagining of Ando Hiroshige's classic 19th century series "53 Stations of the

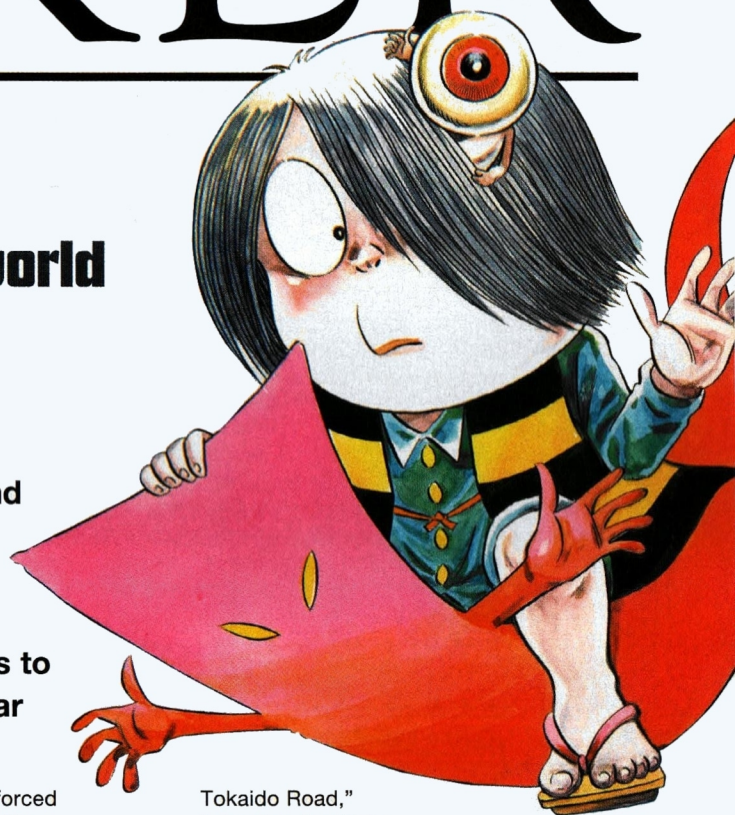
Tokaido Road," is touring the States.

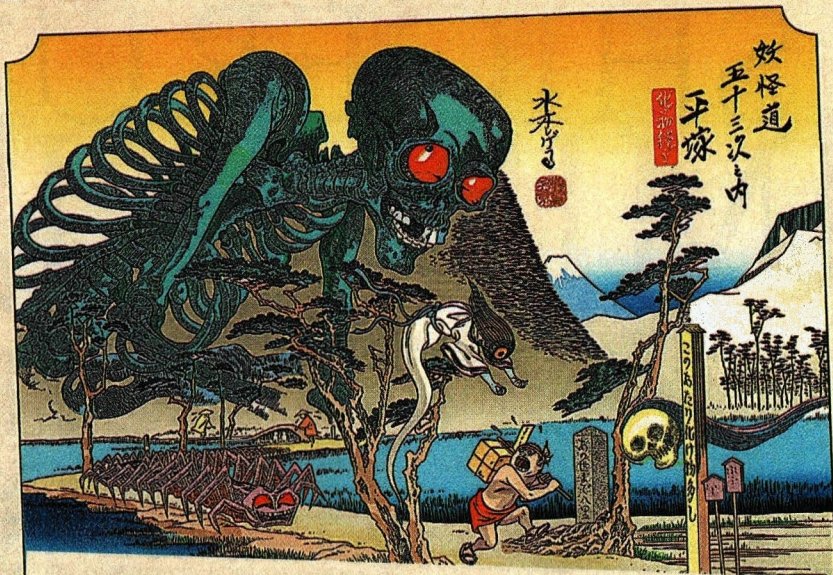
Therefore, it was an honor to be able to interview the manga legend at his home in Japan, where he took the time to talk with *Anime Insider* about yokai now and then. And to get you ready, we've put together a handy lesson on Yokai!

A CRASH COURSE IN YOKAI

Yokai may be creatures of folklore and legend, but they're such a huge part of Japanese mythology that, much like Western myths such as dragons and unicorns, Yokai still appear in modern pop culture.

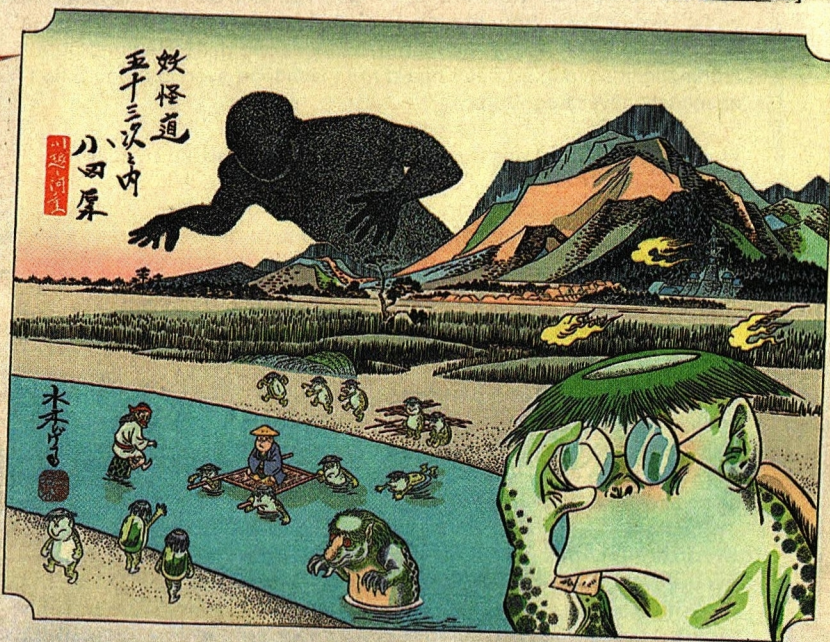
For a grab-bag introduction to these various creatures, you'll want to check out the live-action 2005 film, *The Great Yokai War*,





水木しげる
妖怪道五十三次
平塚

作者 水木しげる
発行 株式会社小学館
編集 細井 1000ののり
制作 アダチ道雄事務所
平成十一年



水木しげる
妖怪道五十三次
小田原

作者 水木しげる
発行 株式会社小学館
編集 細井 1000ののり
制作 アダチ道雄事務所
平成十一年

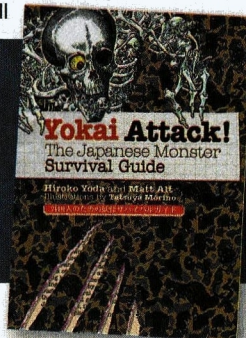
MONSTER MASH Mizuki's "53 Stations of the Yokaido Road" (above) imagines a time in Japan when Yokai were a part of everyday life. The series is currently on tour in the States.

which is available in the U.S. from Tokyo Shock. The movie features a wide range of Yokai straight out of Japanese mythology, such as *kitsune* (fox spirits), *kappa* (water-dwelling demons), *tengu* (goblins) and *yuki-onna* (snow maiden spirits)—plus a cameo appearance by Mizuki himself!

The Yokai featured in the movie are some of the most well known of those in folk tales. Kitsune have appeared in vari-

ous forms in anime like *Yu Yu Hakusho* and *Naruto*. The number of tails on a kitsune indicate its age and power level—the nine-tailed fox was the most powerful fox spirit imaginable in folklore, a fitting model for the deadly Kyuubi sealed inside *Naruto*. *Naruto* includes other Yokai in the forms of the tailed beasts that inhabit other characters, featuring among them a *bakeneko*, or demon cat, as well

The world of Yokai is mysterious and sometimes dangerous, so be prepared! Matt Alt and Hiroko Yoda's illustrated guide to the various types of yokai delves deep into historical records to teach you how to identify a Yokai at a glance—and outwit them. The gorgeous artwork filling the guide comes courtesy of Tatsuya Morino, a former apprentice to Mizuki. (Kodansha International, \$14.95)



as Gaara's famous *tanuki*, Shukaku.

In legend, the *tanuki*, or raccoon dog, were characterized as fun-loving hedonists constantly looking for good times with booze and women, often disguising leaves and other worthless objects as money to get out of paying their bills. The studio Ghibli movie *Pom Poko* portrayed these masters of disguise using their shapeshifting abilities to battle a huge suburban development encroaching on their forest habitat.

The Great Yokai War and *Pom Poko* show the enduring presence of Yokai in the modern Japanese consciousness by placing them in present-day settings, while other offerings portray them in ancient settings. The *Twelve Kingdoms* anime series features *kirin*, a type of Yokai that appears in both Japanese and Chinese folklore. The *kirin* are hooved and horned creatures, similar to Western unicorns, who serve as counselors and wise advisors.

Some series even manage both times. *Inuyasha* presents the tale of a modern schoolgirl named Kagome, a reincarnated priestess, who travels back to feudal times. The titular character is half-Yokai, or *hanyou*, while his elder brother Sesshoumaru and his father are powerful dog Yokai. Other Yokai, such as mountain-dwelling ogres called *oni*, make regular appearances as enemies, but main characters Kilala and Shippou, a *bakeneko* and *kitsune* respectively, are among the Yokai that appear as allies.

There's much more where that came from in the world of Yokai. The film *Dororo*, the anime series *Karas* and the video-game *Okami* are just a few more offerings with diverse casts of these colorful mythological creatures.

Q&A

SHIGERU MIZUKI

On location in his studio, the manga creator delves into the supernatural

Have you always been interested in mythological creatures, or did something happen to spark your interest?

Since I was a child. In Japan since the old days, grandmothers have told the old folktales to the local children. My case was no exception. In my town lived an old woman, Nononba, who was a spiritual, and I often heard traditional tales of Yokai from her. I was so obsessed with hearing Nononba's folktales that even though I cannot remember one thing I learned about arithmetic in school, stories I heard from Nononba even just one time I have absolutely never forgotten.

Have you ever seen anything mysterious or ghostlike in real life?

When I was a child, I felt rather than saw something like that. Since Yokai are attracted to the glow of a lamp in darkness, at times like that I sensed a Yokai somehow. Since the times have changed and we now use fluorescent lamps, we can't see Yokai as often because they tend to flee from the brightness. Therefore, I think that it would be difficult to see Yokai in modern times because of the bright fluorescent light.

What is your favorite kind of Yokai?

Even though I created approximately 3,000 types of Yokai as my own characters, it would have to be Kitaro. Actually, when hearing Nononba's folktales, my imagination brought to life the original character of Kitaro. Though the original character of Kitaro was powerless, because I came to like Kitaro so much, in the manga he became a powerful hero.

Even though your creation of *Hakaba Kitaro* was made a little friendlier and retitled *Gegege no Kitaro* long ago, how does it feel to see your creation continuing in new animations and live-action movies even through today? What impact do you hope it will have on young viewers?

At first I wanted to describe the Yokai's outlook on the world through drawing the graveyard-like image and titling it *Hakaba Kitaro* ("Graveyard Kitaro"). However, when applied to a TV anime, adding the word "graveyard" was not seen as producing a good image, and so the name was changed. Because my name is "Shigeru" and when I was a child everyone called me "Gege," this is where the name "Gegege" came from. The series also became more popular with the general public when Kitaro became a heroic character.

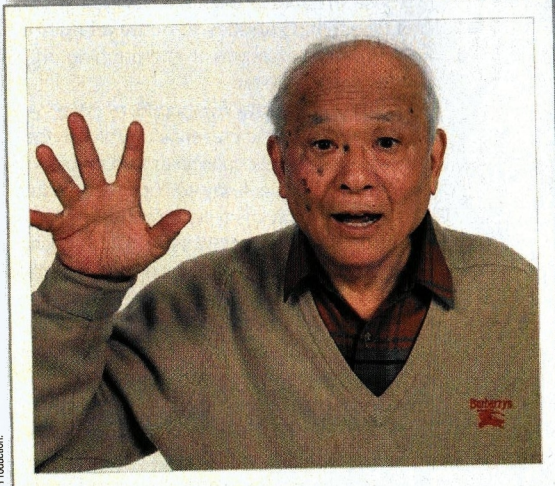
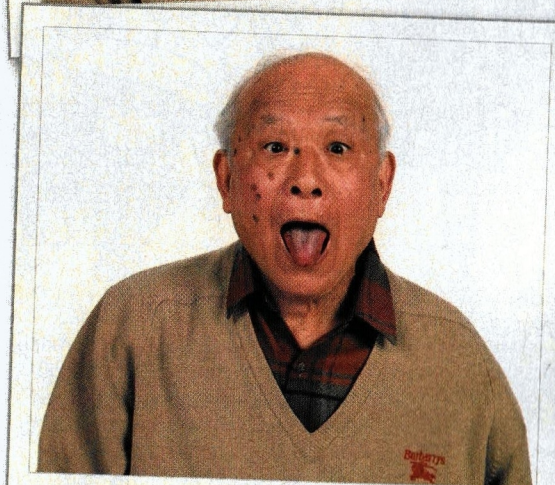
How do you think the world of the Yokai is relevant to the world today?

It's actually a shame; current day society and the world of Yokai have lost their relationship. When I was young, grandmothers would tell folktales to their grandchildren, but it seems that this oral tradition of handing down stories from generation to generation is declining. I feel I am on a mission to insure that these folktales are not lost to future generations, and so I continue to draw manga about Yokai.

We've heard you're beginning a new series called *Tono Monogatari*.

Can you tell us more about this series?

Being 86 years old, I feel grateful that the publisher would bring a new project to me so that I may continue active service throughout my life. The serial comic *Tono Monogatari* began in July in Big Comic. My work is unusual in that I draw the work along with an original story. The Japanese folklorist Kunio Yanagida

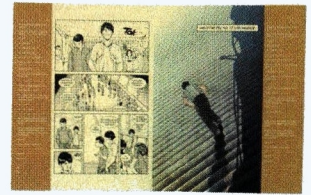


© MIZUKI Production.

MAN OF THE HOUR Mizuki's sense of humor blends with his tales of yokai for deliciously dark and sometimes funny manga stories.

FREEDOM

From Director **Shuhei Morita** (Kakurenbo – Hide & Seek),
 Writer **Dai Sato** (Ghost in the Shell: SAC, Eureka Seven)



Simultaneous
 worldwide BLU-RAY
 release! First time with
 English dub! 28 Page
 manga booklet!



FREEDOM
 BLU-RAY Disc Box

SRP: \$139.98

SPEC: 4-disc box set, 6 Episodes + 1 Special Episode,
 English, Japanese, French audio, English and French
 subtitles, trailers, digests, featurettes, Nissin Cup Noodle TV
 commercial Digest, and more extras!

© 2006 FREEDOM COMMITTEE All Rights Reserved.



BLU-RAY RELEASE!
 Classic OVA series
 re-composed as single
 movie with new
 Diebuster footage!

SRP: \$99.98

SPEC: 3 Blu-ray Disc box
 set, Japanese audio with
 English sub only, containing
 GUNBUSTER the Movie,
 DIEBUSTER the Movie, 3rd
 Bonus disc with interviews,
 featurette, trailer, and two 8
 page collector booklets.

© BANDAI VISUAL, JVC ENTERTAINMENT, GAINAX All rights Reserved.
 © 2003 GAINAX / TOP 2 PROJECT All rights reserved All Rights Reserved.

GUNBUSTER vs DIEBUSTER
The GATTAI!!
 Movie *Aim for the Top!*



SRP: \$49.98

**ALSO SOLD
 SEPARATELY,
 BLU-RAY,
 SUB-ONLY**
 (smaller images)
 Bonus booklet
 included in each!

AVAILABLE AT THESE AND OTHER FINE RETAILERS:



BANDAI
 entertainment.
 www.bandai-ent.com



WHAT'S OLD IS NEW AGAIN *Tono Monogatari* (above) is Mizuki's newest manga, and continues the author/artist's tradition of yokai tales based on traditional Japanese folklore.

MORE MONSTERS!

Your guide to finding Mizuki's work in the States

ART

"53 Stations of the Yokaido Road," Mizuki's woodblock print exhibition, tours MonkDogz Urban Art Gallery in New York, NY from October 16 to November 8. For those outside the New York City area, the gallery's website offers the unique chance to view Mizuki's creations side by side with photos of the original Tokaido Road series.

www.monkdoggz.com/chelseagallery/inventory_mizuki.htm

TOYS

Forbidden Planet is the exclusive U.S. retailer for the figures based on Mizuki's "Yokaido Road" art series. www.fpnyc.com

DVD

The most recent, special effects-filled live-action *Kitaro* movie, which stars singer Eiji Wentz as Kitaro, is available on DVD from BCI for \$19.98. Pick it up at your local DVD store or on Amazon.com!

MANGA

In 2002, Kodansha Bilingual Comics published three volumes of the *Gegege no Kitaro* manga (translated by Ralph F. McCarthy). While the books are now out of print, used copies may be

available on eBay or other websites. ■ Summer Mullins



published works based on local oral traditions, such as *Tales of Tono* in 1912. These tales included stories of Yokai, detailing such beings as the kappa, the *zashiki-warashi* (house-dwelling child spirit), mountain dwelling spirits, people who have been "spirited away" by Yokai, and ghost stories about the living dead. Furthermore, he worked to develop the contribution of folklore to Japanese society by bringing awareness of this folklore into the literary world, whereas before it was limited to the oral tradition.

We are enjoying the undertaking of the production because it is my original main genre of "Yokai."

You've written non-fiction books as well as manga. How does your preparation for those differ from when you're preparing for a new fictional project?

When thinking of the Yokai stories of *Nononba*, which I remember very well even now, the ideas spring naturally from my imagination one after another. Therefore, I have rarely had a hard time during production, and have always found a way to enjoy it. As for non-fiction, in my case it is my experiences of war. In Japan today, I think I am the only one who draws real war manga. I think that without having experienced the tragedy and fear of war firsthand, it is impossible to fully express it. During [World War II] I almost died two or three times, and by drawing on the memory of my experiences, the memory becomes almost too real and I feel fear.

How is the world of manga different from when you began as a creator? How is it the same?

You may think that today the number of people who desire to be cartoonists is greater than in the past, but in actuality the success ratio is about the same; it has always been a competitive society.

Is your creative process the same as it was earlier in your career, or do you do things differently now?

I don't think that anything has changed. The ideas spring very naturally from my mind, and I draw them accordingly. Rather than the drawings coming voluntarily from me, I feel that something I cannot see is somehow telling me what to draw. Because I was absolutely confident as I started work as a cartoonist, neither the content nor the drawing style has been changed by the reader's reaction.

Did your experiences in World War II have any effect on your works?

I haven't been influenced by it. War is only "death" and "fear." There was no creation, only destruction. However,

I have told of my experiences with the fear of war to the next generation through my non-fiction manga.

What are some of your own artistic influences?

Nothing special. When I was a child a manga magazine called *Shonen Club* was being published, although I don't remember any sense of being influenced by it. Having started to draw since childhood, my own artistic sense was polished by finding my place in the world. Since childhood I thought that my work was the best. Even if I couldn't do arithmetic, there was no one else who could draw pictures as I could.

Are there any recent manga series that you enjoy?

Because I was interested only in my own work for a long time, I was not interested in the manga of others. I haven't read anything seriously in recent times because I get tired almost immediately.

What advice would you offer to aspiring young manga-ka?

I think one must be born with the talent of a cartoonist. It's not only about being able to draw pictures, but possessing the sense of being able to attract the reader with a lasting, high-level story. There may be a possibility of succeeding in the future if one can realize that drawing cartoons all day long has its fun times and difficult times, and can feel no bitterness about that. 

Anime Insider would like to thank Mizuki Pro and Mie Ikeda for their kind assistance with the interview.

THE ULTIMATE EVIL RETURNS



HELLSING

The Bird of the Hermes is my name,
eating my wings to make me tame.

ULTIMATE SERIES : I-IV

STANDARD AND LIMITED EDITIONS
NOW AVAILABLE ON DVD

LONDON WILL BLEED AT FUNIMATION.COM/HELLSING



hastings

Right  .com

amazon.com

Fry's

MACYS

fye

© Kouta Hirano • SHONEN GAHOSHA Co., LTD./WILD GEESE

"...ONE HELL OF A SHOW."

DVDTALK.COM



 geneon

DISTRIBUTED BY
FUNIMATION
★ ENTERTAINMENT
© 2006 FUNIMATION ENTERTAINMENT, INC.

Fate stay night™

A clueless magical fledgling is drawn into an ancient battle for the Holy Grail

When your family dies in a fire that you mysteriously survive, you can be assured that your life is headed in a dramatic direction. But the true test of a person is not what they survive, but what kind of person they come out as on the other side. Rather than grow bitter, *Fate/Stay Night*'s Shiro Emiya decides to follow the ambitions of his foster father and devote his life to doing good deeds. There's just the small matter of the supernatural fighters trying to kill him.

When Shiro discovers that his foster father is a magus, he decides to become one as well so that he can protect the weak. Sadly, his magical progress is slow. One evening as he's cleaning his school's dojo,

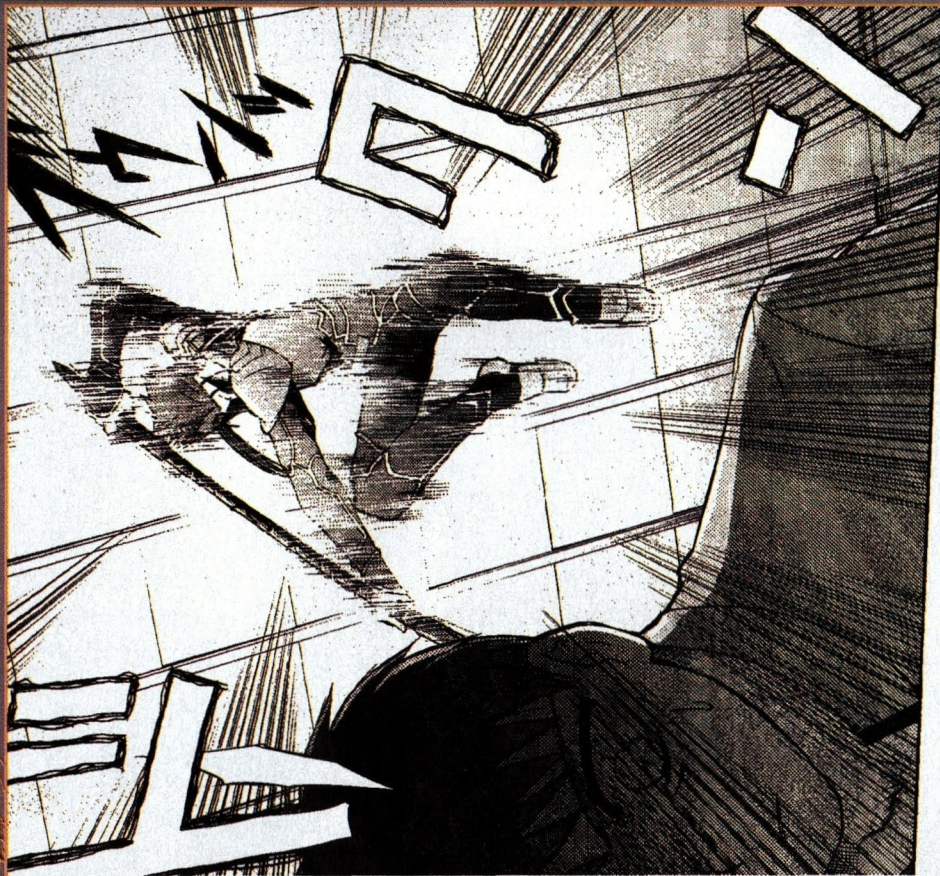
Shiro stumbles across a fierce duel and is fatally wounded. Just as mysteriously, he's healed by his classmate, Rin Tosaka, who uses a strange artifact. Deeply confused, he stumbles home with the threat of one combatant still ringing in his ears.

Fate/Stay Night is Dat Nishiwaki's manga adaptation of the original series, which began as a 2004 computer game chronicling the mystic combatants in the ages-old Holy Grail War. The game was so popular that it was adapted into an anime series by Studio Deen (*Ramona 1/2*) and director Yuji Yamaguchi (*Strawberry Eggs*). Nishiwaki's series began serialization in *Shonen Ace* in late 2006. The series has so far filled six volumes; TOKYOPOP released volume one on October 7. ■ Summer Mullins

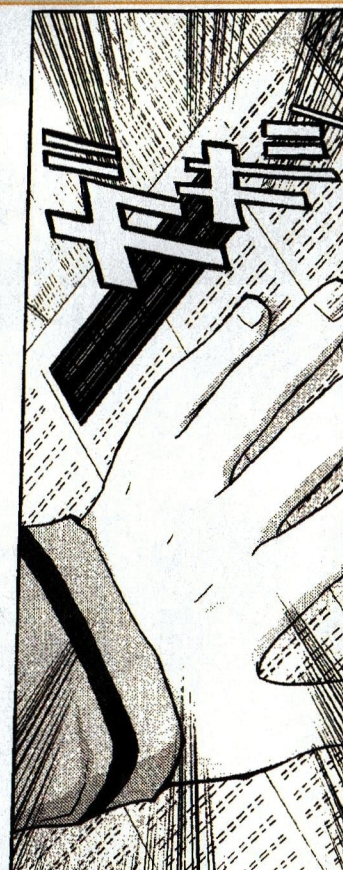
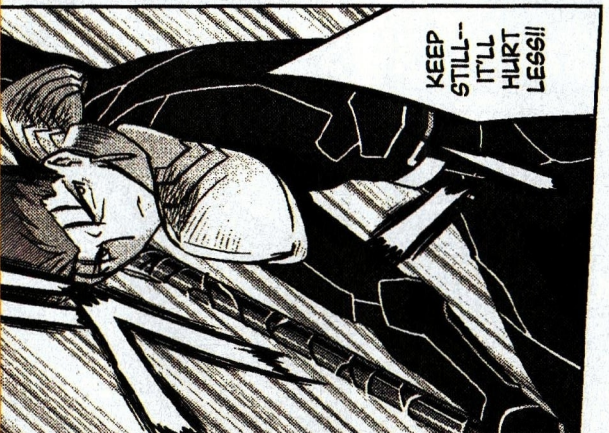
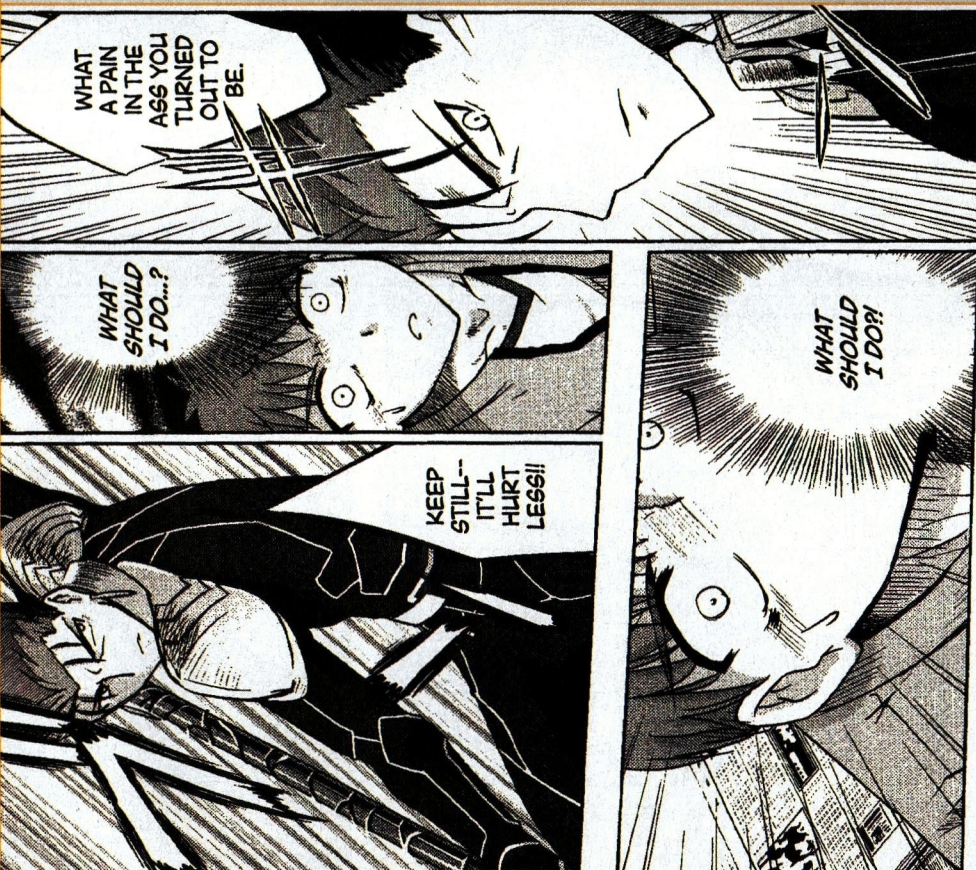
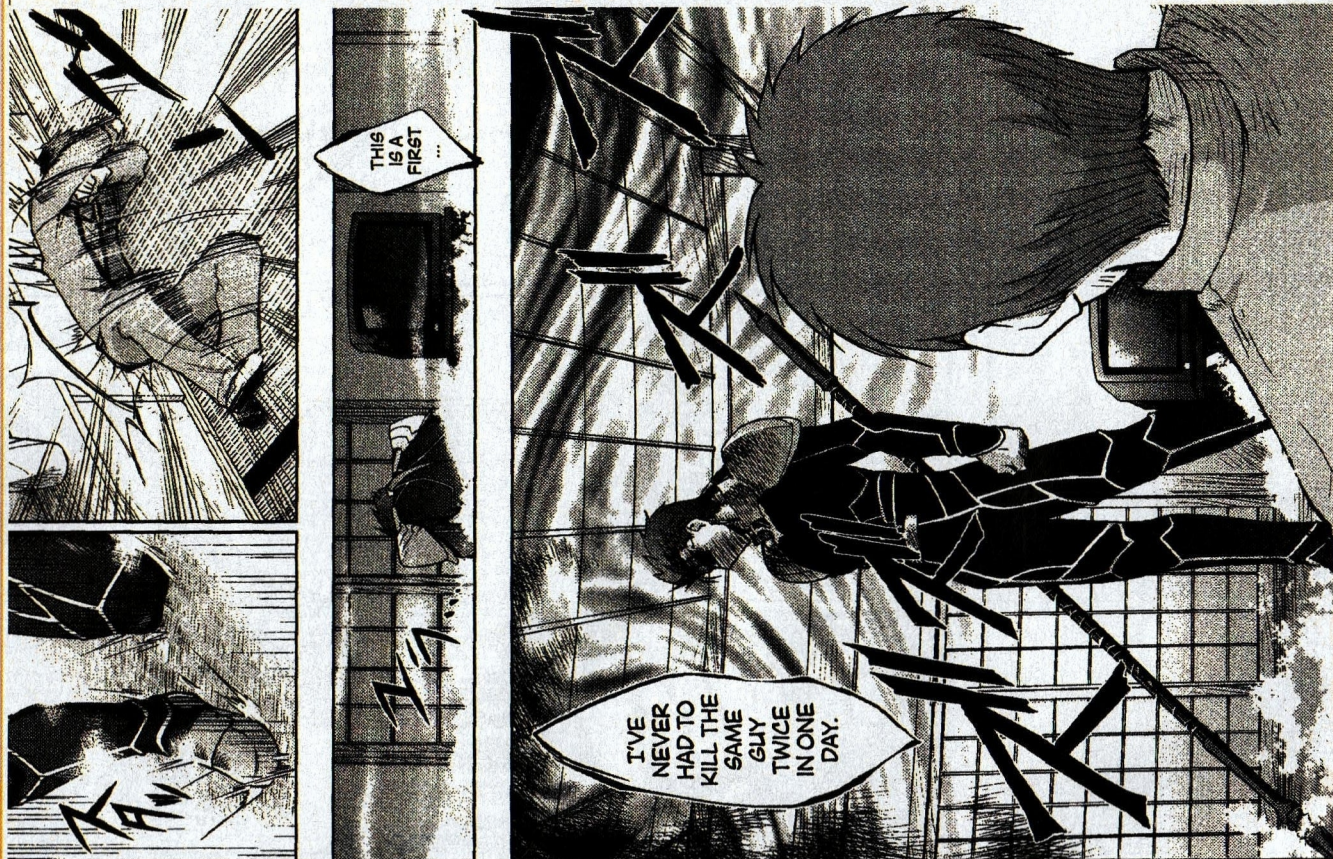
INTHESE PAGES...

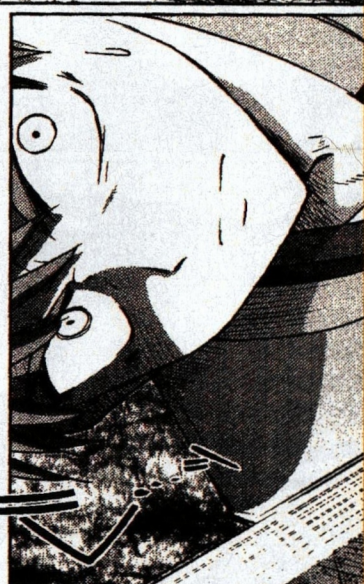
After Rin heals him, Shiro attempts to regroup at home. His fledgling magus powers aren't strong enough to defeat the mysterious man who vowed to kill him—unfortunately, he's about to be put to the test again...

The	Read	
2	1	
	Pages	
	3	
Way	This	
5	4	



© DAT NISHIWAKI 2006 © TYPE-MOON / KADOKAWA SHOTEN







BLACK LAGOON IS BACK

"SIMPLY KICKS
ALL KINDS OF ASS."

ANIMEONDVD.COM

The Second Passage
BLACK LAGOON
STANDARD AND LIMITED EDITIONS DVDS NOW AVAILABLE

BEST
BUY

hugoboss

Right Buy.com

FIVE

SLUGGISH

fye

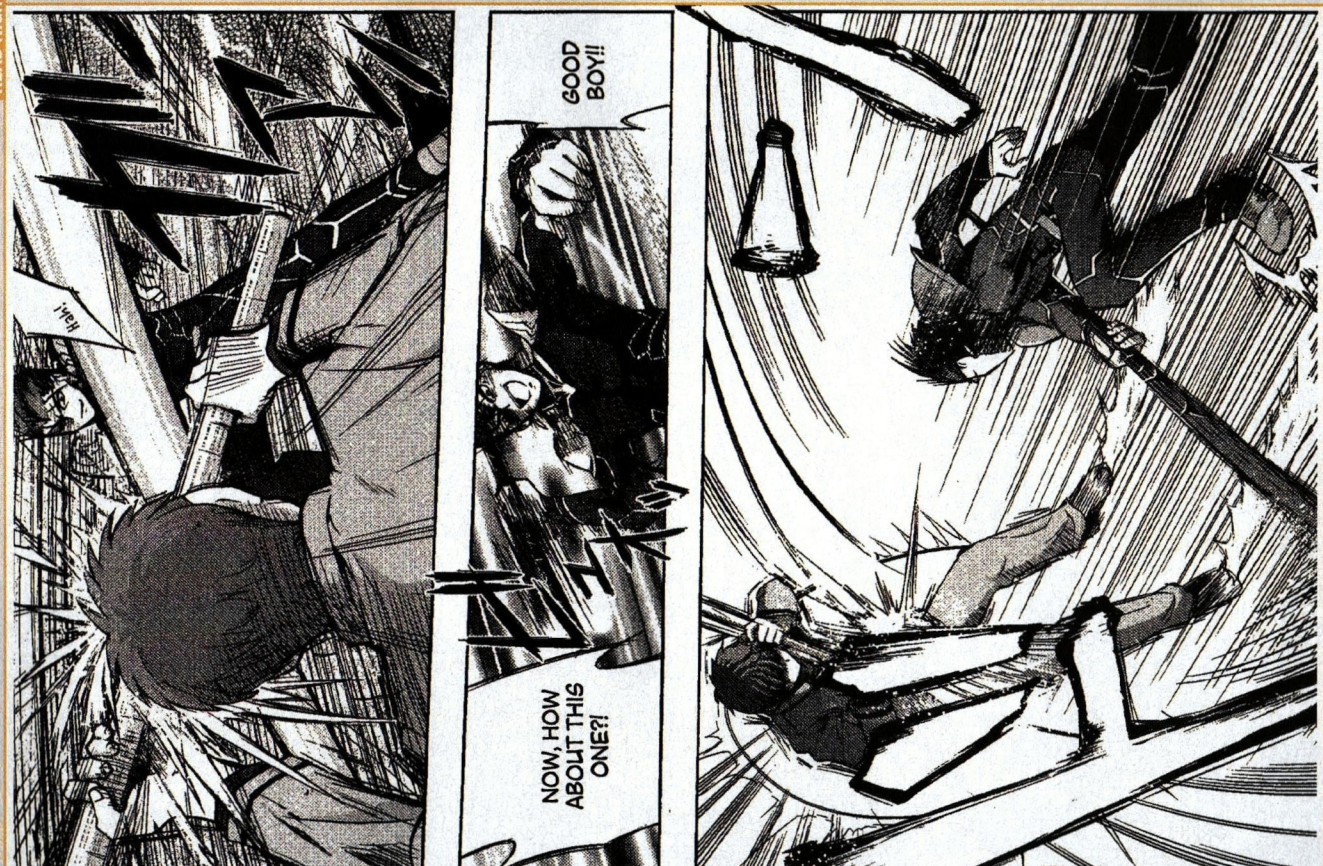
FUNIMATION.COM/BLACKLAGOON

© 2006, REI HIROE • SHOGAKUKAN / BLACK LAGOON PROJECT Package
Design © 2007 Geneon Entertainment (USA) Inc. SteelBook™ Case
Manufactured in USA by G&M Media Packaging Inc.

**BUY IT
TODAY**

geneon

DISTRIBUTED BY:
FUNIMATION
★ ENTERTAINMENT
A FUNAPPS CORPORATION COMPANY



*"I have a secret that I haven't told you... I'm a Magi."
Three years after the death of his foster-father, strange events begin happening in town,
and he finds himself drawn into a battle between the Magi called "Masters."*

THE HOLY GRAIL WAR BEGINS ANEW!

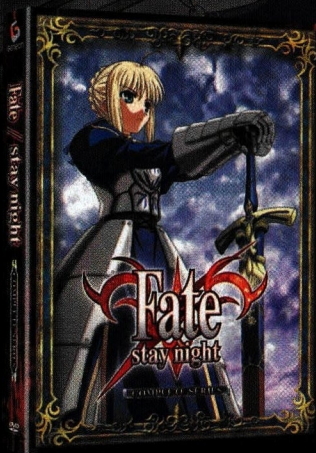
Fate stay night

THE COMPLETE SERIES

CONTAINS EPISODES 1-24

OWN IT ON DVD TODAY

JOIN THE BATTLE AT FUNIMATION.COM/FATESTAYNIGHT



BEST
BUY

hastings

Walmart.com

amazon

fry's

MURRAY

fye

TBS
JAPANESE

geneon

DISTRIBUTED BY
FUNIMATION
★ FORTNIGHTLY
Produced by FUNIMATION

© TYPE-MOON / Fate Project. Distributed by FUNimation® Productions, Ltd. All Rights Reserved.

You are cordially invited

PART ONE OURAN HIGH SCHOOL HOST CLUB

13 EPISODES ON 2 DVDS



Extra Features

ACTOR COMMENTARIES, OURAN HIGH SCHOOL HOST CLUB MANGA PAGES (PRESENTED BY VIZ MEDIA), OUTTAKES, TEXTLESS SONGS, TRAILERS

PRE-ORDER YOUR COPY TODAY
OWN IT ON DVD OCTOBER 28TH 2008



ted
TO
Indulge...

GET SPOILED!



OURAN^{High School}
HOST CLUB

YOUR HOSTS AWAIT YOU AT FUNIMATION.COM/OURAN

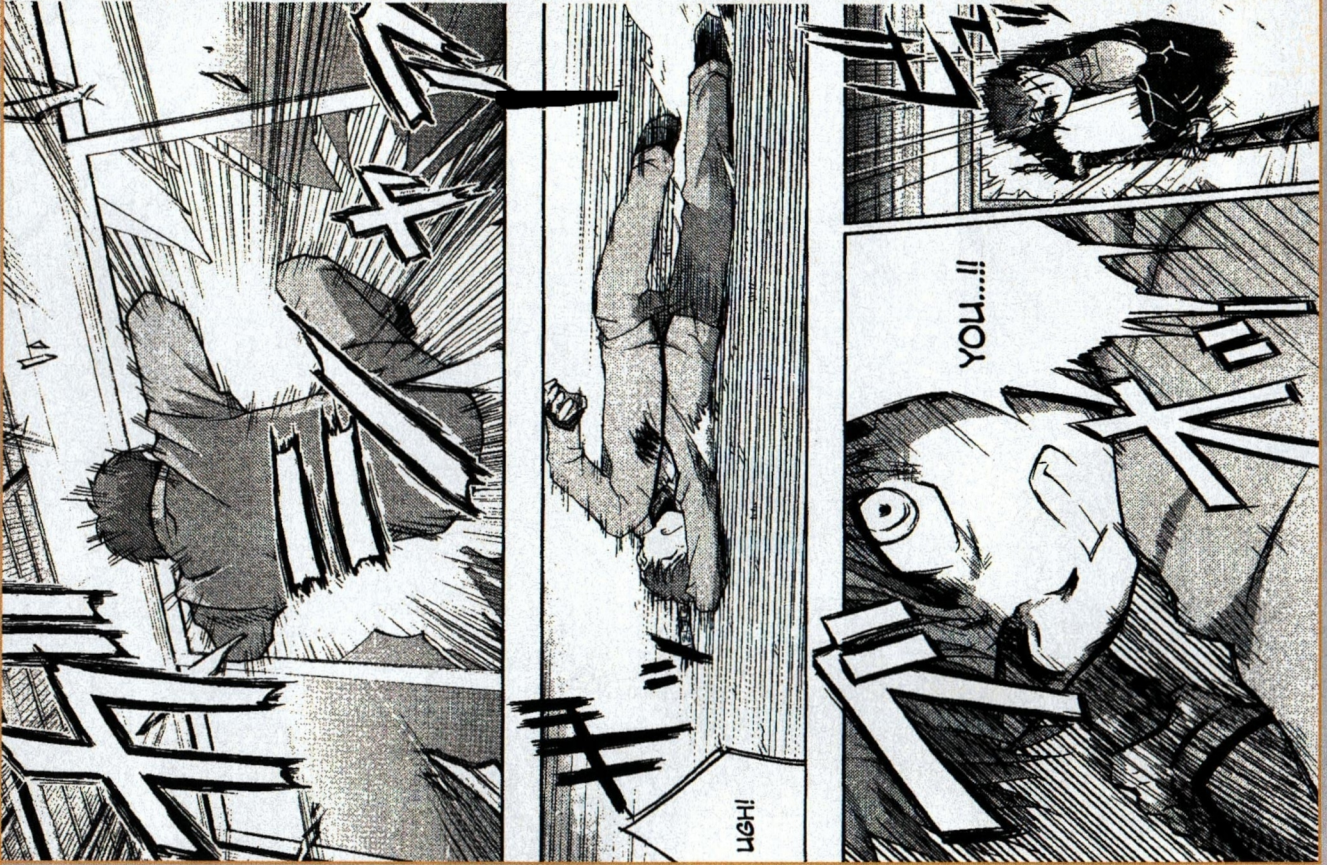
FUNIMATION
★ ENTERTAINMENT
A FUNIMATED CORPORATION COMPANY

Based on the comic "Ouran High School Host Club" by Bisco Hatori originally serialized in "Lala" published by HAKUSENSHA Inc. © Bisco Hatori / Hakusensha. © MTV / VAP / Rome / Hakusensha. Licensed to FUNIMATION® Productions, Ltd. All Rights Reserved.

CONT
HERE

© DAT NISHIWAKI 2006 © TYPE-MOON / KADOKAWA SHOTEN

8



READ RIGHT TO LEFT



© DAT NISHIWAKI 2006 © TYPE-MOON / KADOKAWA SHOTEN

9



WIZARDWORLD TEXAS

Arlington Convention Center
NOVEMBER 7-9, 2008

MEET YOUR FAVORITE TOY COMPANIES & CREATORS!



**FAR EAST
MONSTERS!**



**THE SHIFLETT
BROTHERS!**

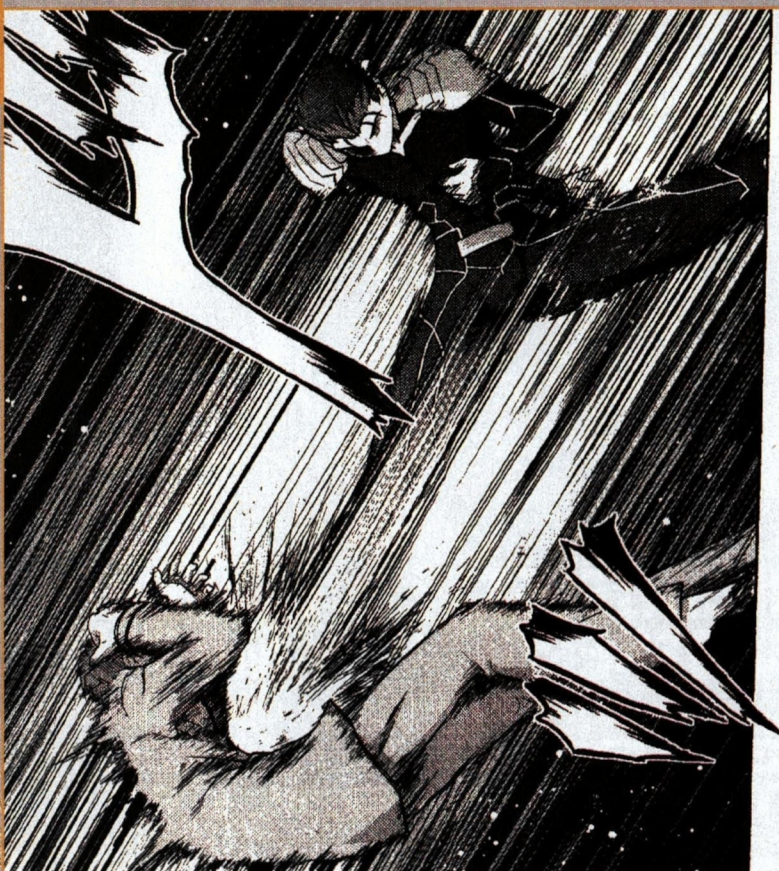
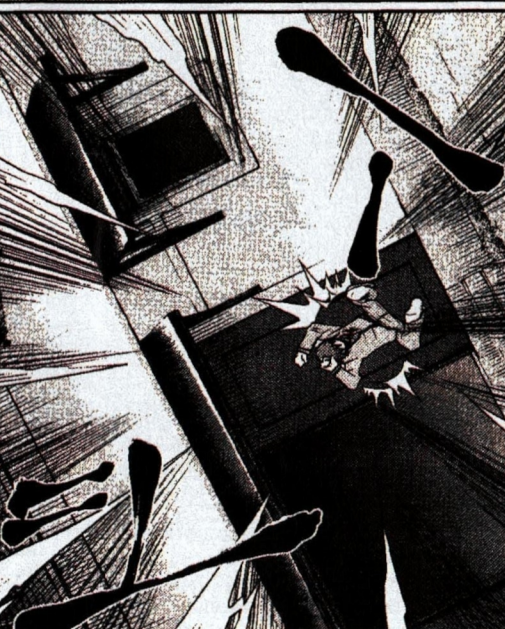


**CLAYBURN
MOORE!**

**SAVE UP TO 20% WHEN YOU
BUY YOUR TICKETS ONLINE!**

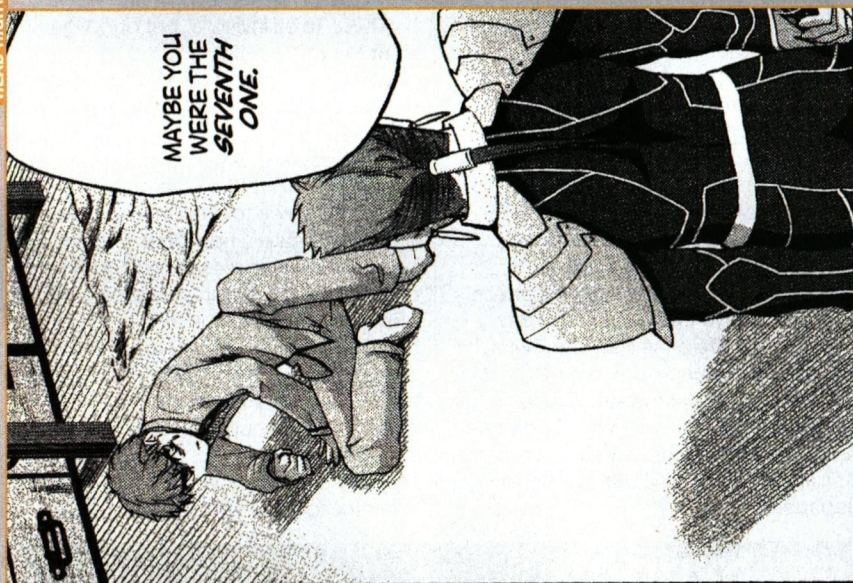
WIZARDWORLD.COM

Guest list subject to change. Additional fees may apply. Supplies may be limited and manufacturers may impose limits.
Signings and panels may be limited due to available space and signatures are not guaranteed. Wizard World © 2008. All rights reserved.





Who is Shiro's opponent, and what is his role in this deadly and mysterious battle? Find out in volume 1!



SISTER 2 SISTER

The Kano Sisters speak exclusively with 'A.I.' about their new anime

You might not have heard of them yet, but the Kano Sisters are super-celebrities in Japan—and they're coming to America. Authors, models, voice actresses and philanthropists Kyoko and Mika Kano will star in the Pony Canyon-produced and Production I.G.-animated *Abunai Sisters*, debuting worldwide on DVD in January. The animated shorts follow Koko and Mika, two actresses who are actually secret agents—and are called on to save the world at the most hilariously inconvenient times. *Anime Insider* caught up with the jet setters after their press conference at Baltimore's Otakon this August. For more information or to buy the 10-episode series, check out kanosisters.net/

How did you first decide to get involved with an anime project? Who approached whom?

KYOKO: Yoko [producer] from Pony Canyon really understands what we want and that we really love anime. So quickly, once we wrote out the idea to Yoko, she developed the idea into *Abunai Sisters*!

You like anime—do you have a favorite?

KYOKO: I especially like the animated sequences in *Kill Bill*, by Quentin Tarantino, which was animated by Production I.G. I think it's sensational. [In English] That why we're really happy about *Abunai Sisters* being animated by the same company!



DANGER ZONE Kyoko (left) and Mika pose with action figures of their characters for *Abunai* ("Dangerous") *Sisters* at Otakon.

In the States, anime used to be underground, but now it's more mainstream. Has that "underground" stereotype of anime changed in Japan, too?

KYOKO: I'm not underground at all, and I like anime! So I think it has changed. You're known for teaching self-confidence to Japanese women. Do you see differences between women in the States and in Japan?

KYOKO: Women in Japan and America are very different culturally and socially. American women have their own personalities and opinions. But Japanese women are always thinking, "Can I say that?" The big difference between Mika and I and other Japanese women is that we do and say what we want. This is based on our confidence—which comes from our experience. American women are very straightforward, but this is very rare for Japanese.

While developing *Abunai Sisters*, did you have ideas about what your characters would be like?

KYOKO: We wanted the characters to be like the characters in *Charlie's Angels*. Of course Yoko understood that another very important part for us was appearance; that the characters also look like us. We love action films, especially the 007 movies. 20th Century Fox actually gave us official certificates to be Japan's Bond Girls! Unfortunately, at the time, they weren't shooting a movie, but we'd love to star in one.

What do you think the most useful super power would be?

KYOKO: To be invisible, but only when I want to be.

MIKA: I'd like to read minds. I think I already can, just a little, through body language and facial expressions!

Kyoko, do you have any plans to have your books published in English?

KYOKO: I'd love to publish them here! [In English] I have a new book that's just come out for teen girls called *The Wisdom of Jewelry*. Each month you have a different message, like "Don't be afraid, even if you think that everyone hates you."

If you could give one tip for maintaining health and beauty, what would it be?

KYOKO: Love yourself, know yourself, take care of yourself.

MIKA: If you don't love yourself, you can't love other people. ■ Megan Rebeck

WHO ARE THE KANO SISTERS?

The story of Japan's current "it" girls

The Kano Sisters, Kyoko and Mika, have come a long way since their 1997 debut when the magazine *25ans* featured the pair in the fashion publication's "super readers" spotlight. Their history is something of a mystery, having lived a low-key life until then. At one point, there was a third Kano sister, Harue, but she no longer appears with Kyoko and Mika.

Whatever their history, after the article, the pair soon found themselves in

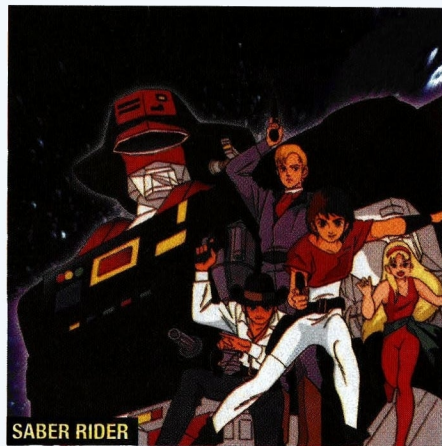
demand as lifestyle consultants. They lecture on anything from how to keep a man to how to live glamorously. The siblings have released a number of dolls, videos, calendars, and elder sister Kyoko is a published author, with an autobiography, *Millennium Muse*, as well as non-fiction titles and teens' books. The pair were reportedly in the running to be Bond Girls in *Casino Royale*. ■ MR



IN MROD THEY TRUST

'Saber Rider' offers classic mecha action

For a young anime fan in the eighties, there wasn't a whole lot in the way of selections, but there were three things that you could bank on coming across the Pacific: epic space adventures, giant robots and a team of color-coded teenagers to pilot them. Now a younger generation finally gets a chance to see one of these anime



SABER RIDER

staples when Victor Entertainment brings the first 17 episodes of *Saber Rider and the Star Sheriffs* to DVD this month.

In the far future, mankind leaves Earth to settle the galaxy. This "New Frontier" is policed and protected by the Cavalry Command. Unfortunately, it isn't long before the evil Outriders invade our galaxy from another

dimension. The only way to fight back is the RA MROD, a spaceship that transforms into a gigantic robot (voiced by Peter Cullen, *Transformers'* Optimus Prime).

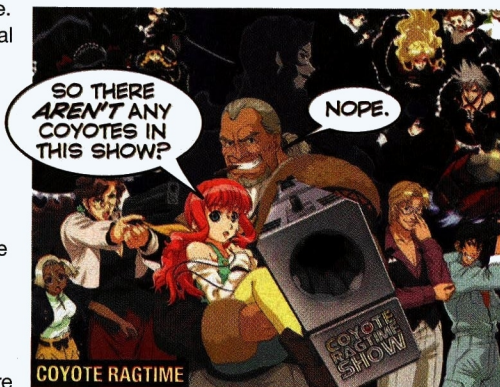
The 1986 series was based on a 1984 anime known as *Star Musketeer Bismarck*. The DVD release will be English language only, but at \$29.99, the DVD is a treat for any nostalgic fan. ■ MR

COLLECTIVE INSANITY

Non-sequiturs abound in 'Coyote Ragtime'

Collections are the hot items now that FUNimation has rescued over 30 titles from ADV's catalogue, many of which it is releasing in complete series sets. One of the titles coming back is the fun and ridiculous *Coyote Ragtime Show*. Just how ridiculous can a series about a group of space pirates be? Let us enlighten you all the way to the DVD store.

- The crew's goal is to make it to the planet known as Graceland. It is not known what, if any, connection Elvis may have to the planet.
- The villains of the series are the Marciano Sisters. They're androids and they don't know how to do anything without killing someone in the process.
- One of the sisters loses her body in the first episode. For the rest of the series, her head is carried around in a birdcage.
- One of our heroes escapes capture from an enemy spaceship by using the ship's built in ejector seat (complete with parachute). Luckily, the ship hasn't left atmosphere. Yet.
- There is no problem in this series that cannot be solved by blowing stuff up. For the record, "stuff" equals "planets." ■ MR



COYOTE RAGTIME

SO THERE AREN'T ANY COYOTES IN THIS SHOW?

NOPE.

LIP SERVICE

Vic Mignogna, voice of Tamaki Suoh in 'Ouran High School'



He might not be as much of a ladies' man as Tamaki Suoh, the character he plays in *Ouran High School Host Club*, but Vic Mignogna is still a fan favorite, and why not? From *Ouran* to *Fullmetal Alchemist* and beyond, he's got plenty of leading roles to win credibility.

Who do you think could get more customers in a host club, you or Tamaki?
That's the easiest question I have ever been asked. Tamaki wins. Hands down.

What appealed to you about playing Tamaki?

Ever since I saw a few episodes quite some time ago, I thought what a fun character he was. I had no idea where the story went. So the odds of my getting to play him were slim, to say the least. I'm so excited by this privilege!



FULLMETAL ALCHEMIST'S ED

Which character that you've played do you most relate to?

I'd have to say that it's a cross between Hiroki (*Princess Nine*) and Kurz Weber (*Full Metal Panic!*)

In *Ouran*, Tamaki is very charming. In *Bleach*, Ikkaku is incredibly tough. Who would you rather be like?

If I could choose, I'd love to be charming like *Tamaki*. Of course there's a time for toughness too... can I be a mix of both?

What's one thing you know about Tamaki that no one else knows?
How much the Host Club means to him.

What's the craziest convention experience you've had?

There have been quite a few of those, too! Someone gave me an envelope with a lock of hair earlier this year! And then there's the good ole "Can I lick your hand?" Crazy, right?

How do you prepare for a session in the recording booth?

I prepare by warming my voice up and getting it ready to do whatever character I'm to work on that day. Since we don't have scripts ahead of time, there is only so much one can do to actually "prepare."

With the news that a new *FMA* anime is on the horizon in Japan, would you be ready to step back into Ed's shoes?

I am so excited about the possibility of more *FMA* that I can barely stand it! I think that's one of the greatest anime series ever, and the prospect of getting to do more is so thrilling. I know everyone in the cast would absolutely love to do more! ■ Angela Hanson

THANK YOU FOR STOPPING BY! THAT WILL BE 50,000¥, PLEASE.



OURAN HIGH SCHOOL'S TAMAKI

dvdreleases NOVEMBER

AH MY GODDESS COMPLETE SEASON 2

Belldandy and Urd have new competition for Keiichi's affections when Keiichi accidentally calls the Earth Support Agency. The rival agency has sent the goddess Peorth and she's not leaving any time soon.

(FUNimation, \$69.98)

BLEACH VOL. 13

Time is almost up for Ichigo and the gang if they wish to save Rukia before her execution the following day. Having just achieved Bankai, Renji challenges Rukia's big brother Byakuya. Meanwhile, it's chaos as usual back in Karakura Town. (VIZ Media, \$24.98)

BLUE DRAGON VOL. 2

Zola and the team free prisoners from the fortress. Later, Shu and his companions have a fateful meeting with a young waitress who joins the group.

(VIZ Media, \$14.98)

COYOTE RAGTIME SHOW COMPLETE COLLECTION

When the King of the Space Pirates dies, he leaves his young daughter in the custody of his friend, Mister, and with her, the location of his hidden treasure. Unfortunately, he's being pursued by a detective who wants to arrest him, a clan of sisters that want him dead and the treasure for themselves, and the treasure is located on a planet that's going to explode within a week. (FUNimation, \$49.98)

DARKER THAN BLACK VOL. 1

When an obscure territory known as Hell's Gate mysteriously appears in Tokyo, people known as Contractors begin to receive mysterious powers...at a price. Contractors work as spies and assassins performing various odd jobs. Hei is one such Contractor, but he's a little different from the rest.

(FUNimation \$29.98)

DRAGON BALL Z MOVIES 5 & 6

Frieza's older brother Cooler has arrived on Earth seeking revenge on the one who killed his brother: Goku. Then, after a mysterious metamorphosis, Cooler decides that he would rather consume the planet Namek instead. (FUNimation, \$29.98)

DRAGON BALL Z SEASON 7

Dragon Ball just isn't Dragon Ball without a martial arts tournament: this time, it's the great Saiya-man vs. Videl. Meanwhile, the evil magician Babidi has plans for global annihilation—plans that require waking an ancient and hungry super-weapon. (FUNimation, \$49.98)



DRAGON BALL Z

tion—plans that require waking an ancient and hungry super-weapon. (FUNimation, \$49.98)

GHOST HUNT SEASON 1 PART 2

The SPR investigate the case of a former prime minister. Children keep disappearing at one of his properties. Later, the investigators decide to take on a dangerous case that has already killed three psychics. Includes the first 13 episodes. (FUNimation, \$49.98)

GUYVER COMPLETE COLLECTION

When Sho Fukamachi accidentally comes across a strange alien armor, it merges with him, turning him into "Guyver 1." Unfortunately, the guyver is stolen technology, and the evil corporation developing it wants its weapon back. (FUNimation, \$69.98)

HARUKA VOL. 8

Watch the continuing adventures of Akane and her eight guardians in this penultimate volume! (Honneamise, \$29.98)

KARIN VOL. 6

The sweet story of everyone's favorite reverse vampire concludes in this volume. Karin decides to undergo the ritual to become a full-fledged vampire. But is the sacrifice really worth it? (FUNimation, \$29.98)

KUJIBIKI UNBALANCE COMPLETE COLLECTION

At the prestigious Rikkyouin Academy, the student council is determined via lottery. But before they can ascend to their positions of power, the upcoming student council must complete a series of tasks or risk expulsion. Also included are all three episodes of the Genshiken OVA. (Media Blasters, \$59.99)

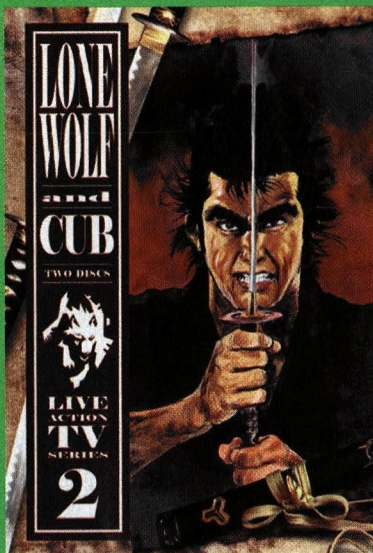
MUSTSEE

Lone Wolf and Cub

If you thought that the recent "classic TV on DVD" boom was just to find a way to finally get your hands on all of the episodes of Lynda Carter's *Wonder Woman*, think again. Back in December 2006, Geneon (Japan) released the first season of the 1973 live-action samurai series known as *Lone Wolf and Cub*. Earlier this year, Media Blasters began releasing a subtitled version for the U.S.

Based on the immensely popular manga by Kozuo Koike and Goseki Kojima, *Lone Wolf and Cub* has spawned numerous film adaptations (some released under the English title *Shogun Assassins*). The series follows the samurai executioner Itto Ogami, who returns home one day to find himself falsely dishonored and his family brutally murdered. He leaves with the sole survivor—his one-year-old son Daigoro—and they become the assassin duo known as "Lone Wolf and Cub" in order to catch up to the clan that dishonored them. The dramatic series focuses on battles as much as the real principles and lifestyle of the samurai.

The first four volumes, which each contain five 45-minute episodes, are currently available for \$24.99. There are 78 episodes in all. ■ MR



COMING IN
NOVEMBER

FROM BANDAI
entertainment®

GURREN LAGANN

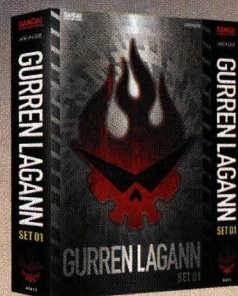
From animation powerhouse Gainax!
(*Evangelion*, *FLCL*, *Gunbuster*)

Featuring All New American English dub!
Winner Best TV series at Tokyo Anime Fair!

PART 1 (EPISODES 1-9)

SRP: \$39.98

Includes: Vol. 1 and 2 with English and Japanese audio! Textless opening and closing, Yoko Goes to Gainax featurette, Staff interviews!



LIMITED EDITION (EPISODES 1-9)

SRP: \$64.98

Includes: All Part 1 edition extras, plus High Quality Artbox with Core Drill LED light.



VOL. 1 (EPISODES 1-5)

SRP: \$24.98

English and Japanese audio! Yoko Goes to Gainax, staff interviews!

VOL. 2 (EPISODES 6-9)

SRP: \$24.98

English and Japanese audio! Textless opening and closing!



© GAINAX, KAZUKI NAKASHIMA/Aniplex, KDE-J, TV TOKYO, DENTSU

GUNDAM SEED DESTINY TV MOVIE



**REIMAGINED
STORY! NEW
FOOTAGE!**

TV MOVIE 3

SRP: \$29.98

© 2006-2008 SOTSU • SUNRISE • MBS

Silent Möbius The Motion Picture



LIMITED EDITION

SRP: \$39.98

INCLUDES: English and Japanese audio, Regular DVD extras plus Steelbook and Original

**FIRST
TIME ON
DVD!**

REGULAR EDITION

SRP: \$29.98

INCLUDES: English and Japanese audio, Promotional Video, Theatrical Trailer

©1991 STUDIO TRON / Kadokawa Pictures, Inc.



AVAILABLE AT THESE AND OTHER FINE RETAILERS



BANDAI
entertainment®
www.bandai-ent.com

DISC DRIVE

Japan's DVD awesomeness



Kanokon Vol. 6

Based on the popular light novel series from Katsumi Nushino, *Kanokon* is a tale about two girls with tails and the boy they both love. If you think romance in high

school is hard, imagine when the two girls vying for your attentions are a fox spirit and a wolf spirit, respectively. A character CD is included with the limited edition.



Monochrome Factor Vol. 4

A teenage boy is told that it is his destiny to restore the balance between the human world and the world of shadows in this series based on the manga from Kaili

Sorano The limited edition comes with a cell phone strap, a sticker and a bonus DVD.



Seto no Hanayome OVA

When a teenage boy discovers that the maiden who saved his life is a mermaid, the pair are sentenced to death and the only way they

can avoid their execution is to get married. Unfortunately, the mermaid's father is not very happy about the arrangement. The DVD is packed with a figure. ■ MR

FREESWAG

Naruto Box 10

Naruto fans everywhere clamor for VIZ Media's special, uncut editions of their favorite shonen series.

This 10th box set of the boy ninja's exploits features the episodes where Naruto confronts Sasuke before Sasuke leaves the village for good and comes complete with a "Summoning Creature" Katsuyu figure. Pick it up for \$69.98. ■ MR



MORIBITO: GUARDIAN OF THE SPIRIT VOLS 1 & 2

Spearwoman with a mysterious past, Balsa, is asked to be the bodyguard of the young Prince Chagum after the Emperor comes to believe that his son is possessed by an evil spirit. (Media Blasters, \$24.99 each)

MY SANTA

A girl named Mai is given a mission to improve the life of a young boy named Santa. He hates the holiday because he was born on Christmas Eve. Unfortunately for him, Mai is a student at The Santa Claus Academy. (FUNimation, \$14.98)

NARUTO MOVIE 3: GUARDIANS OF THE CRESCENT MOON KINGDOM

Guarding the royal family of the Crescent Moon Kingdom seems like an easy enough job for Kakashi, Sakura, and Naruto—even if the family is a bit spoiled. OK, a lot spoiled. But then, the trio also weren't expecting to be caught up in a villainous uprising, either. (VIZ, \$29.98)

NARUTO VOLS. 29 & 30

Sasuke has joined forces with the evil Orochimaru and it's up to Naruto and his friends to save him. First, it's Neji vs. Kidoumaru, and then Naruto faces Kimimaro in these action-packed volumes. (VIZ Media, \$19.98 each)

PHOENIX COMPLETE COLLECTION

The anime based on Osamu Tezuka's final manga and life's work. The series features short, interconnected stories taking place over various timeframes. (Media Blasters, \$29.99)

PUMPKIN SCISSORS SEASON 1 PARTS 1 & 2

Three years after a devastating war, the Pumpkin Scissors military unit, headed by Alice L. Mavin, was created to help aid in the war relief effort. Then one day, a mysterious war veteran randomly joins their ranks, and the lives of the soldiers are never the same again. The two sets form the complete first season. (FUNimation, \$59.98 each)

SHONEN ONMYOUJI VOL. 4

Masahiro struggles for acceptance as an onmyouji. Meanwhile, a vengeful spirit begins haunting the Fujiwara clan. Can the grandson of the amazing Abe no Seimei finally break free from his grandfather's shadow? (FUNimation, \$29.98)

STRAWBERRY PANIC VOL. 5

Kaname challenges Amare to a tennis match, but are the two girls really rivals, after all? As the time to announce the

candidates for Étoile draws near, the girls of the Astraea Hill schools have their work cut out for them. (Media Blasters, \$22.99)

TSUBASA RESERVOIR CHRONICLE VOL. 9

When Yuuko has no choice but to force Mokona, the travelers are sucked into a war-torn world and separated. With Kurogane and Fay on opposite sides, it's up to Syaoran and Sakura to discover the mystery of a disappearing castle. (FUNimation, \$29.98)

VEXILLE SPECIAL EDITION

When illegal experiments in Japan start turning the populace into a race of cyborg slaves, it's up to Vexille, the lone surviving member of a para-military government task force, and a secret resistance movement to save Japan. Also available on BluRay. (FUNimation, \$29.98, \$34.98)

WHEN THEY CRY VOL. 5

Shion finally discovers who is responsible for Satoshi's mysterious disappearance. Now, all she needs to do is prove it. Meanwhile, Rena meets her father's new girlfriend and she doesn't like the woman at all. (FUNimation, \$29.98)

YU YU HAKUSHO SEASON 3

The Dark Tournament continues in season three. It's Toguru against Yusuke in this epic battle. Later, Yusuke meets a former Spirit Detective. (FUNimation, \$34.98)

TSUBASA'S SAKURA AND SYAORAN



crunchyroll PRESENTS
EGG MAN

EXCLUSIVE WORLD PREMIERE IN OCT 2008



JAPAN MYSTERY
 WRITER'S ASSOCIATION
 AWARD
 YEAR 2006



YEAR 2006
 3 BEST FIGHTING
 STORIES IN JAPAN

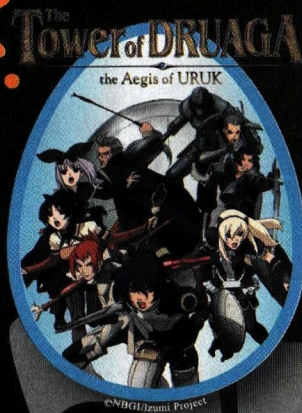


YEAR 2007
 BEST AMAZING
 MYSTERY IN JAPAN



©Yumeaki Hirayama / TOE 2008

RECENTLY HATCHED
 ON CRUNCHYROLL



Presented by **crunchyroll.com**

along with:



T.O Entertainment

television リモコンはどこなんだ!?

SOAP-FREE TV

The world of dramatic Japanese daytime television



CAFE KICHIJOJI DE-LICIOUS The antics of the manga *Cafe Kichijoji de* come to literal life thanks to the live-action TV series (above).

It's good to be a TV viewer in Japan. Shorter series—usually 13 episodes—mean that fans get a chance to see a broader variety of different shows. No matter the time of day, there's something on for any viewer.

The vast majority of shows run in the evenings, in timeslots spanning from roughly 7 to 10 PM. But Japanese broadcast schedules are more liberal than their American counterparts, and in some seasons drama addicts can find original programming starting as late as 2:30 AM. These weekly shows tend to feature the big stars and most lavish production budgets, and frequently are based on anime, manga and novel properties.

That said, the evening isn't the only time of day when drama dominates the Japanese

airwaves. There's a timeslot between roughly 1 and 2 PM where some stations opt to run daytime dramas. Usually you can expect to see roughly two or three daytime series running in any given year.

These dramas aren't as prolific as, say, soap operas are on American daytime TV. Instead they run weekly, and in most respects are a lot like their evening counterparts.

The main difference is demographics. Overwhelmingly, these daytime dramas tell stories about women and are targeted at a female audience. With most women

still choosing to become homemakers after marriage in Japan, networks can count on women being home and ready to tune in around lunchtime. The tone can range from light romantic comedy (*Café Kichijoji de*) to serious shows that tackle issues like rape (*Uruwashiki Oni*), abortion (*Hanagoromo Yumegoromo*) and prostitution (*Beni no Monsho*).

However, the most popular and long-running series of daytime dramas on Japanese TV is NHK's *asadora* ("morning drama") series, which began in 1961 with the series *Watashi to Musume*. *Asadora* enjoys an unusual weekday schedule. Each episode is 15 minutes long and begins at 8:15 AM, with a rerun later in the day at 12:45. Usually NHK will run two

different *asadora* in a single year, one beginning in spring and another beginning in fall. An unusually popular show can merit additional episodes and even end up running for a full year or more, as was the case with the 307-episode 1994 series *Haruyo, Koi*.

The 2008 spring *asadora* was *Hitomi*, a slice-of-life series focusing on the troubles and adventures of a teenage girl from the Shitamachi region of

Tokyo. *Hitomi* first tries to rebuild her family's emotional life in the wake of her parents' divorce, and then later in the series moves to Sapporo to begin training as a dancer. The fall *asadora* is *Dandan*, a vehicle for identical twin actresses Mana and Kana Mikura. The two girls are separated at birth, but both become singers in their adulthood. ■ Alicia Ashby



CHANNELSURFING

Quick hits of TV news

TWO BIRDS

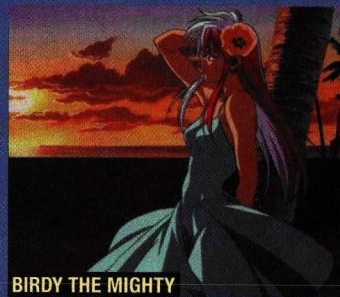
Staff of the *Birdy the Mighty Decode* TV anime confirmed that a 13-episode sequel series has been greenlit and will air on Japanese TV in 2009. *Decode* is a comedy sci-fi series about the misadventures of space cop Birdy, who must share her body with a high school student as part of a bizarre double life.

HOME RUN

An anime series based on Atsushi Kagurazaka's light novel series *Taishou Yakyuu Musume* ("Taishou Baseball Girls") has been scheduled for production. The novels take place in 1925, when 14-year-old girls Koume and Shouko decide to start a baseball team despite their rarity in Japan at the time.

SLAP UP SLAPSTICK

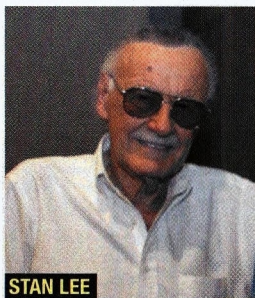
Gonzo announced that it will produce an anime based on the *Arad Senki* MMORPG. *Slap up Party -Arad Senki-* will be an action comedy set in the game's world, and will hit Japanese TV in 2009. The *Arad Senki* MMO was originally released in Korea as *Dungeon & Fighter*. ■ AA



BIRDY THE MIGHTY

EXCELSIOR!

Comics legend Stan Lee develops anime with Gonzo, Bones



STAN LEE

When Stan Lee debuted *Ultimo*, his manga collaboration with Shaman King creator Hiroyuki Takei, in the pages of *Shonen Jump*, he was just getting warmed up for the first phase of a plan to take Japan by storm. Now the co-creator of Spider-Man, Iron Man and the X-Men is developing original anime projects with some of Japan's top animation studios.

Stan Lee is working with Bones to develop *Hero Man*, an unusual mecha anime set on the west coast of the

United States. A boy named Joey finds a toy robot called Hero Man, which has the ability to grow to enormous sizes and fight evil. Bones is throwing the full weight of its impressive roster of creators behind *Hero Man*, with Hitoshi Nanba (*Grappler Baki*) in the director's chair, character designs by Shigeto Koyama (*Gurren Lagann*) and animation direction by Toshihiro Kawamoto (*Cowboy Bebop*).

Simultaneously, with studio Gonzo, Lee is developing a series called *Quartz*. Very few details about the series are yet known. It is being co-produced by Stan Lee's Pow! Entertainment and Gonzo's parent company GDH. No staff information, length or airdate information for *Quartz* has yet been announced, but Lee hinted at the project during panel discussions at San Diego Comic-Con last July.

Despite being able to take credit for creating virtually every major Marvel Comics character and writing most of the stories adapted into the blockbuster movies based on those characters, Stan Lee hasn't been content to sit on his impressive laurels. Just a few of his projects since then include a series of original superhero movies for the Sci-Fi channel, the Pamela Anderson adult cartoon vehicle *Stripperella*, a line of comics for Marvel's longtime rival DC Comics and the popular reality show *Who Wants to be a Superhero?* ■ AA

TUNEINTOKYO

The latest anime debuts on Japanese TV



BATTLE SPIRITS SHONEN TOPPA BASHIN

Bashin is an energetic elementary school student who loves card games. He learns about the popular game Battle Spirits, which features cards that represent magical creatures, and then accidentally bumps into "J": a genius Battle Spirits player who suddenly challenges Bashin to a match. The ensuing battle awakens a mysterious power in the pendant Bashin always wears: he can summon

the creatures in the cards. Produced by Toei and Sunrise in conjunction with Bandai, the designers of the "spirits" include Atsushi Takeuchi from Production I.G, who did mech design for Mamoru Oshii's *The Sky Crawlers* and for *Ghost in the Shell*.



KOIHIME MUSOU

There's always room for another anime based on the classic tale of *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, and *Koihime Musou* has the added zing of being a mainstream anime based on an adult game. Aisha (this version's iteration of Kan'u Unchou) is a traveling warrior who specializes in defeating bandits. On her journey she meets RinRin (Chouhi), Sei (Chouun), and other characters from the *Three Kingdoms* legends who organize themselves into various factions and begin fighting one another. Sometimes the fights involve weapons, but sometimes they might be about saving puppies or winning eating contests...you never know in this world of action/moe fanservice.

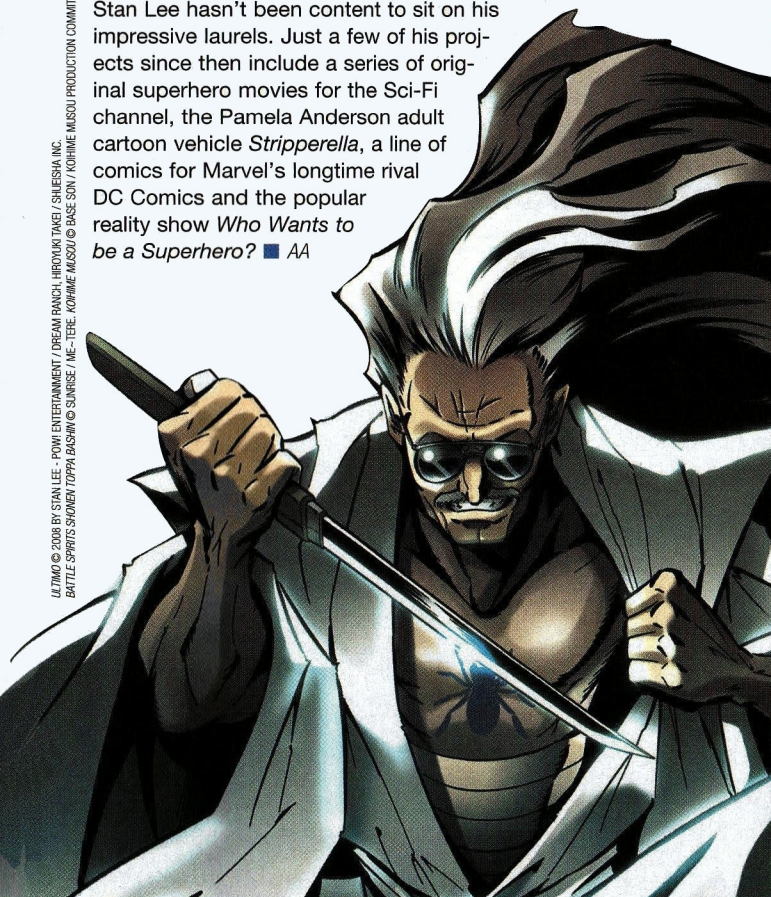
MACH GIRL

It's just what you've always wanted: a *Speed Racer* spinoff starring a cute, tanned, daisy dukes-clad blonde teenage girl wearing heavy



makeup who calls herself "Rip," adjusts her lipstick, then drives off in a tricked-out white vehicle marked with a large "M" and takes down a few baddies while unintentionally winning a race. Yes, it's Mach Girl,

which is something like what you'd expect *Speed Racer Barbie: The Cartoon* to be like. The Studio Rong-animated shorts will run on Japan's Cartoon Network and feature character designs by Suzuka Yoshida (*AkubiGirl*, *Vampiyan Kids*). Rip is voiced by seiyuu Marika Matsumoto (*Paradise Kiss* Miwako). ■ *Gia Manry*



START THE COUNTDOWN

Vengeance is at hand in Del Rey's 'Gankutsuou'

When Frenchman Alexandre Dumas first put pen to paper and began writing what was to be *The Count of Monte Cristo*, he surely never imagined that, nearly 160 years later, his nail-biting epic of true love lost leading to cold vengeance would be transformed into a futuristic tale of supernatural proportions. But this is exactly what acclaimed director Mahiro Maeda and studio GONZO did with *Gankutsuou*, and this month Del Rey follows up with the manga version of the space-age revenge saga.

The manga, written by Maeda himself with Yuri Ariwara, made its debut in Kodansha's seinen manga magazine *Afternoon* (home of *Genshiken* and *Blade of the Immortal*) in May 2005, shortly after the anime completed its initial run in Japan. The final chapter appeared in the March 2008 issue of *Afternoon*, and the series has been collected into a trilogy of volumes. Artist Ariwara takes the heady, cacophonous color of the original anime and adapts it into an entirely different, yet equally compelling, brooding monochrome.

Gankutsuou begins with the Viscount Albert de Morcerf who, while vacationing on the moon with his friend Franz, meets and befriends a mysterious self-made nobleman from the furthest reaches of the galaxy, known only as the Count of Monte Cristo. Later, back on Earth, Albert introduces the Count to a handful of families occupying upper echelons of Parisian society—little suspecting that his new friend has made a deal with the devil and is secretly planning to wreak a long-deferred vengeance upon them all. Though the key storyline and many of the original novel's characters remain intact, *Gankutsuou* takes full advantages of the modern setting's flashy possibilities.

Since the anime's debut in 2004, *Gankutsuou* has become a fan-favorite for the way it



PORTRAIT OF VENGEANCE *Gankutsuou*'s Count of Monte Cristo won't be satisfied with taking revenge on those who wronged him; he's got their children in his sights, too.

melds action with nuanced, literary storytelling. At this year's Anime Expo, a selection of the anime's original prints was placed on display for the appreciation of the attendees. In addition to the manga adaptation, there is also a series of light novels—undoubtedly easier reading than Dumas' original tome.

Revenge may be sweet, but *Gankutsuou* in manga form is sure to be even sweeter. Even without the impressively talented Mahiro Maeda behind it, *The Count of Monte Cristo* is a classic for a reason, so fans in pursuit of a great story should be certain to check this one out! ■ Casey Brienza

QUICKREADS

News briefs from the bookshelves

ICE BLADE RUNNER

Tsutomu Takahashi is relaunching his popular hardboiled detective manga *Jiraishin* in the November debut issue of Kodansha's new *Afternoon* spinoff magazine *Good!* *Afternoon*. The new series will be titled *Jiraishin Diablo*. *Jiraishin* was released in the United States by Mixx Entertainment (now TOKYOPOP) during the late 1990s as *Ice Blade*.

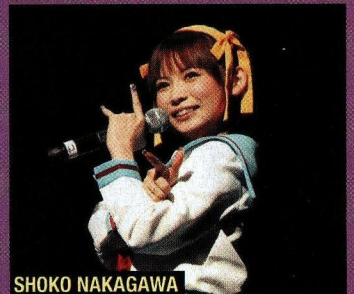
HEROIC AGE

Otaku idol Shoko Nakagawa is expanding her talents to the manga realm as a new series, *Sukashikashipanman* ("sand-dollar man"), has debuted in *Dengeki Daioh* based on her designs. Nakagawa created the character and showcased it on her blog, but the manga will be drawn by Arima Honda.

MEIMU GUNDAM

The November issue of Kadokawa Shoten's *Gundam Ace* magazine will feature an all-new manga adaptation of the *Mobile Suit Gundam MS IGLOO 2: Juuryoku Sensen* anime drawn by Meimu. The story recounts the mecha war from the perspective of ordinary soldiers.

■ CB and Angela Hanson



SHOKO NAKAGAWA

SECOND STORY

'Death Note' creators return with new series 'Bakuman'

Writer Tsugumi Ohba and artist Takeshi Obata, the creative team that brought the world *Death Note*, have returned to the pages of *Weekly Shonen Jump* with an all-new serial. Titled *Bakuman*, the manga began its run this past August and stars an aspiring artistic duo, perhaps modeled upon Ohba and Obata themselves, determined to beat the odds and succeed in the manga world.

Ninth grader Mashiro Moritaka has not taken the notion of becoming a manga-ka seriously since he was a kid. This changes, however, when classmate Akito Takagi approaches him and pleads with him to draw the manga he writes. Though at first reluctant, Mashiro changes his mind after entering into a secret pact with the girl he likes to get married after they have both achieved their dreams.

No American release of *Bakuman* has yet been announced, although Japanese publisher Shueisha has made the first chapter available in English for a limited time on its *Jumpland* website. But it will surely be only a matter of time before Mashiro and Akito are pursuing their dreams on Western shores. ■ CB



DEATH NOTE'S L

SUPERSIZE ME

Omnibus editions the latest trend in U.S. manga publishing

The bigger, the better. This is a motto by which American consumers are famously driven by, and publishers have discovered that it can apply to manga as well. In Japan, even the most popular titles are commonly reprinted in diminutive, pocket-sized tankobon editions, but in the U.S., the oversized omnibus, which collects the content of multiple manga volumes under one bound cover, is out to rule the roost—and the bookshelves.

The 3-in-1 omnibus edition first made a significant appearance in 2007, when Del Rey released omnibus editions of *Tsubasa*, *xxxHOLiC* and *Negima!* in an exclusive deal with Barnes & Noble. Later that year, TOKYOPOP began publishing oversized hardcover reprint editions of some of its banner titles, including *Fruits Basket* and *Battle Royale*. VIZ Media was right behind with "VIZBIG" editions of *Rurouni Kenshin*, *Dragon Ball*, and *Dragon Ball Z*, as was

Seven Seas with *Aoi House*. It's convenient for readers who want an all-in-one package that provides a discount compared to buying single volumes one at a time.

VIZ has planned more VIZBIG reprints for the future, and TOKYOPOP will continue publishing limited print runs in both hardcover and paperback. For fans who want to go big, this month there's *Dragon Ball Vol. 3* and the *Aoi Yori Aoshi 1-3 Collection*. ■ CB



WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE

BECK

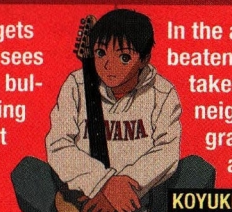
Yukio "Koyuki" Tanaka's ordinary life changes when he meets Beck, a patchwork pooch belonging to the genius guitarist Ryusuke Minami. But every rock performance is different—here are some of the differences between Harold Sakuishi's original manga and its animated adaptation. ■ CB

MANGA

ANIME

THE BEGINNING

In the manga, Koyuki gets beaten up because he sees a little old lady getting bullied by some thugs trying to sell her a counterfeit Rolex. Feeling sorry for her, he intervenes.



In the anime, Koyuki gets beaten up because he simply takes a wrong turn in a bad neighborhood. He isn't a grandma's boy; he's just a total wimp.

KOYUKI

THE MINAMIS

Both Ryusuke and his little sister Maho are returnees who are more comfortable in English than they are in Japanese, especially when it comes to written Japanese.

Although the Minami siblings Ryusuke and Maho are technically bilingual in the anime as well, they both have heavy accents in English, and it's clear that they aren't entirely fluent.

THE POOL

Koyuki's perverted friend Tanabe steals Izumi's swimsuit, and Koyuki ends up taking the blame. Izumi bails him out by drafting him onto the school's swimming team. He meets Saito while practicing.

No explanation of any sort is given for why Koyuki has suddenly decided to take up swimming at the municipal pool. Nevertheless, he meets Saito there, and the two strike up an acquaintance.

THE LITTLE SISTER

Maho is quite gregarious and childishly petulant. The first time she and Koyuki meet, she gives angrily him the finger and curses him out in English—hardly the stuff of future romance.



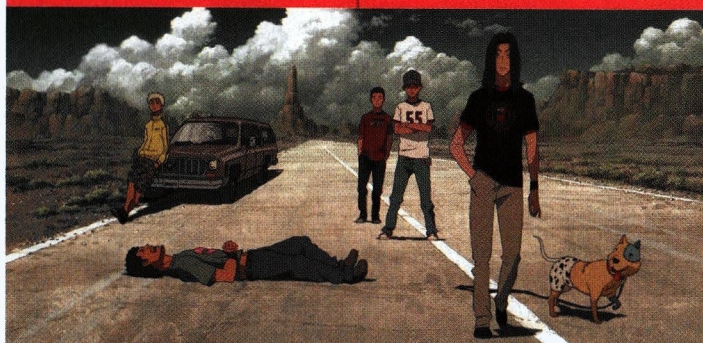
MAHO

The Maho of the anime seems more mature and more gracefully measured in her initial attitude toward Koyuki. She is also more vulnerable and recognizes Koyuki's positive qualities.

THE END

The 33-volume manga series outlasted its animated adaptation and finished its run earlier in 2008. The manga details the adventures of Koyuki and the rest of the cast in the U.S. and beyond.

The Madhouse anime, which is complete at 26 episodes, only covers a portion of the manga's entire plot and ends after the Greatful Dead concert and the announcement of Beck's tour in America.



BECK © HAROLD SAKUSHI / KODANSHA PUBLISHERS, LTD. / 2004 BECK PRODUCTION COMMISSION. BECK MANGA © HAROLD SAKUSHI. DRAGON BALL & DRAGON BALL Z MANGA © BY BIRD STUDIO. DEATH NOTE © TSUGUMI OHBA • TAKESHI OBATA/SHUEISHA • VAP • MADHOUSE • NTV • DREAM PARTNERS.

mangareleases NOVEMBER

07-GHOST VOL. 1

Teito has been schooled by his enemies—literally. The officials of his academy are behind the downfall of his kingdom and the death of his father! Yukino Ichihara and Yuki Amemiya (Go! Comi, \$10.99)

BERSERK VOL. 26

To save Casca and Farnese, Guts takes on a horde of trolls on their home turf. But even the Black Swordsman isn't ready for what's to follow! Kentaro Miura (Dark Horse, \$13.95)

B. ICHI VOL. 1

To maintain his special powers as a "Dokeshi," Shotaro has to do one good deed per day. Will he keep up his regimen while searching for his sister? From the creator of Soul Eater. Atsushi Ohkubo (Yen Press, \$10.99)

BLACK JACK VOL. 2

Black Jack is an unlicensed surgeon who despises the medical establishment and will, for a steep fee, perform miracles for even the criminal underworld. Osamu Tezuka (Vertical, \$16.95)

BLOOD+ VOL. 4

Diva has found a way to make Saya go totally berserk, and plans to sic her on her friends—and then turn every human being into a Chiropteran! Asuka Katsura (Dark Horse, \$10.95)

CAPTIVE HEARTS VOL. 1

Suzuka has a slave who waits on her hand

and foot—but for the life of her she just wishes Megumi would stop being so servile. From the creator of *Vampire Knight*. Matsuri Hino (VIZ Media, \$8.99)

CHIBI VAMPIRE VOL. 11

Karin's sister Anju has always been sensitive to sunlight, but lately her aversion seems to be getting stronger. Is she close to becoming a fully awakened vampire? Yuna Kagesaki (TOKYOPOP, \$9.99)

CRAYON SHINCHAN VOL. 5

A police officer does his duty by helping a lost little boy...but when that boy is Shin, maybe the world would be better off if he'd stay lost! Yoshito Usui (CMX, \$7.99)

D.GRAY-MAN VOL. 11

Allen and the other Exorcists are trapped within the Arc of Noah. There's only one way out—but two young Noah with startling new powers stand in their way... Katsura Hoshino (VIZ Media, \$7.99)

FAIRY CUBE VOL. 3

Ian has one chance left to take back his life.



D.GRAY-MAN

Is he going to be able to defeat Hokage? And will he save Rin? Concluding volume. Kaori Yuki (VIZ Media, \$8.99)

FRUITS BASKET VOL. 21

Kyo was able to get over his guilt about the death of Tohru's mother by blaming it on Yuki, but he can't run away anymore. Will Tohru hate him now? Natsuki Takaya (TOKYOPOP, \$9.99)

FUSHIGI YUGI: GENBU KAIDEN VOL. 7

At long last, Takiko has gathered together the Seven Celestial Warriors of Genbu. So what's this about needing an eighth warrior before her wish is granted? Yuu Watase (VIZ Media, \$8.99)

GANKUTSUOU VOL. 1

While vacationing on the moon, the young nobleman Albert encounters the mysterious Count of Monte Cristo. Little does he know that their meeting is no coincidence. Yura Ariwara (Del Rey, \$10.95)

GO WEST! VOL. 1

Naomi arrives in the New World in search of her family. Too bad her horse only goes in one direction. Guess which one. From the creator of *Those Who Hunt Elves*. Yu Yagami (CMX, \$9.99)

GUN BLAZE WEST VOL. 3

Viu Bannes and his companions continue their journey, taking on a guy with a mechanical arm and an army of knights along the way. Concluding volume. Nobuhiro Watsuki (VIZ Media, \$7.99)

MUSTREAD

The Melancholy of Haruhi Suzumiya Vol. 1

Kyon is just an ordinary guy who wants his high school career to be normal. Unfortunately, what he wants doesn't ever seem to matter, and the irrepressible Haruhi Suzumiya soon drafts him into her newly-formed SOS Brigade, a club dedicated to the investigation of the supernatural. But little does Haruhi know that she's the supernatural one—with the power to create and destroy entire universes on a whim—and Kyon sure as heck isn't going to be the one to tell her!

Much like its star heroine, Nagaru Tanigawa's beloved light novel series has spawned a veritable universe of adaptations, including several videogames, many volumes of manga and a fourteen-episode anime that became an otaku favorite virtually overnight. With Yen Press' release of the first of two ongoing manga series, which boasts appropriately frenetic art by Gaku Tsugano, the Haruhi fanbase should grow even further. Get ready for a wild ride into a whole new world—or worlds! The first volume will be available October 28 for \$10.99. ■ CB



● GAKU TSUGANO
● NAGARU TANIGAWA
CHARACTER DESIGN BY NOIZI ITO

DRAGON BALL Z[®]

REMASTERED



AVAILABLE **NOV 11TH 2008**

SEASON SEVEN

- 25 ACTION PACKED UNCUT EPISODES ON 6 DISCS
- INCLUDES THE ENTIRE GREAT SAIYAMAN AND WORLD TOURNAMENT SAGAS
- NEWLY REVISED ENGLISH DIALOGUE WITH JAPANESE AUDIO
- MARATHON PLAY SPECIAL FEATURES

AVAILABLE **NOV 11TH 2008**

- INCLUDES TWO UNCUT MOVIES IN ONE SET ON DVD
- STUNNING 5.1 SURROUND SOUND WITH ORIGINAL JAPANESE AUDIO
- DIGITALLY REMASTERED FROM THE ORIGINAL 35MM FILM
- COLLECTIBLE METAL TIN

COOLER'S REVENGE — AND — THE RETURN OF COOLER DOUBLE FEATURE



AVAILABLE ON
DVD VIDEO Blu-ray Disc



DRAGON BALL GT COMING TO DVD
SEASON ONE DEC. 9TH 2008
DIGITALLY REMASTERED



© 2008 BIRD STUDIO/SHEISHA, TOEI ANIMATION. Return of Cooler Film ©1992 TOEI ANIMATION CO., LTD. Cooler's Revenge Film ©1991 TOEI ANIMATION CO., LTD. Dragon Ball Z ©1989 TOEI ANIMATION CO., LTD. Licensed by FUNimation® Productions, Ltd. All Rights Reserved. Dragon Ball Z and all logos, character names and distinctive likenesses thereof are trademarks of TOEI ANIMATION. © 1996 TOEI ANIMATION CO., LTD. © 2003 BIRD STUDIO/SHEISHA, TOEI ANIMATION. Licensed by FUNimation® Productions, Ltd. All Rights Reserved. Dragon Ball GT and all logos, character names and distinctive likenesses thereof are trademarks of TOEI ANIMATION.

find out more at
www.dragonballz.com



READONARRIVAL

Manga to learn Japanese for

Me-Teru no Kimochi



1 Hiroya Oku (*Gantz*) plays with a twist on the hikikomori phenomenon in this three-volume series. Koizumi Shintaro is a housebound 30-year-old whose father cares for him. But everything changes when his father marries a beautiful younger woman before dying of cancer. Now his stepmother is the only one left to take care of Koizumi, who can't help but be attracted to her.

Namenayo

A Japanese phenomenon of the '80s is back with this anthropomorphic adventure. Twenty-eight years after Satoru Tsuda's photographs of cats dressed as different types of Japanese citizens gained popularity, this new manga series brings back cats dressed like gang members, bikers, students and more.



NAKAYOSHI

Girl is the name of the game when it comes to *Nakayoshi*, a shojo favorite since 1954. It was once the home of *Sailor Moon*, and *Sugar Sugar Rune* and *Hell Girl* also appeared in it. Bonus prizes include items like a Peach-Pit character-themed tarot set!

Angela Hanson



HAYATE X BLADE VOL. 1

Hayate hopes to enter her school's sword-fighting competition, but she needs a partner first. Alas, the gal she's got her eye on wants nothing to do with her! Shizuru Hayashiya (Seven Seas, \$9.99)

HIGURASHI WHEN THEY CRY VOL. 1

Hinamizawa seems like the idyllic rural town, but Keiichi soon learns that it labors under a curse...and his newfound friends know more about it than they let on! Karin Suzuragi (Yen Press, \$10.99)

INUKAMI VOL. 1

The young Keita comes from a long line of Inukami-trainers, but his personal Inukami, the wild and mischievous Yoko, is anything but compliant. Mari Matsuzawa (Seven Seas, \$9.99)

KING OF THORN VOL. 6

Zeus is threatening to use the power of Medusa to recreate the world. But once Kasumi learns the truth regarding her and her sister, will she be still be able to do what is necessary? Concluding volume. Yuji Iwahara (TOKYOPOP, \$9.99)

MUSHISHI VOL. 6

A young hunter inherits the power to lead animals to their deaths. This power is poisonous to its wielder, however, and Ginko labors to save the hunter before he succumbs. Yuki Urushibara (Del Rey, \$12.95)

PEACE MAKER VOL. 5

The Shinsengumi foil a plot by the Choushuu rebels to burn Kyoto to the ground, and Tetsunosuke finally confronts the man who murdered his parents. Concluding volume. Nanae Chrono (TOKYOPOP, \$9.99)

ROSE HIP ROSE VOL. 3

Eager to prove herself, Natsuki tries to take down Sheep, but she's shot by one of the terrorists! Will the bad guys stand a chance against an enraged Kasumi? Tohru Fujisawa (TOKYOPOP, \$9.99)

SHOULDER-A-COFFIN KURO VOL. 2

Kuro, a mysterious young woman in black wearing a coffin strapped to her back, wanders the land in search of a witch. But which witch? Satoko Kiyuduki (Yen Press, \$10.99)

SUIHELIBE! VOL. 1

A cute extraterrestrial named Lan in pursuit of truant alien life forms crash-lands in Tetsu's high school classroom. Could Lan be the biology club's unlikely salvation?! Naomi Azuma (CMX, \$9.99)

SUNSHINE SKETCH VOL. 2

Yuno is living away from her parents for the first time, attending school and slowly but surely getting ever closer to her dream of becoming an artist. Urme Aoki (Yen Press, \$10.99)

TOKKO VOL. 2

Ranmaru has realized that the girl who saved him was one of the Machida incident survivors. Could this explain why monsters have been attacking him? Tohru Fujisawa (TOKYOPOP, \$9.99)

TRIGUN MAXIMUM VOL. 13

Vash has taken a serious beating at the hands of his enemies. Nevertheless, saving his friends—and the human race—is still on his agenda. Yasuhiro Nightow (Dark Horse, \$9.95)

WE WERE THERE VOL. 1

Nanami has just begun high school, and she soon develops a crush on the enigmatic Yano. Unfortunately, his secrets may be too much for her to handle. Yuki Obata (VIZ Media, \$8.99)

YAKITATE!! JAPAN VOL. 14

Shadow White, Kazuma's top opponent at the Monaco Cup, is training under Kirisaki, the man who has sworn to crush Team Japan and destroy the Pantasia bakery! Takashi Hashiguchi (VIZ Media, \$9.99)

YOKAIDEN VOL. 1

An untried yet brave young boy ventures into the spirit world to find the yokai who is responsible for his grandmother's death. Little does he know what awaits him there! Nina Matsumoto (Del Rey, \$10.95)



TRIGUN MAXIMUM'S VASH



WIZARDWORLD TEXAS

Arlington Convention Center
NOVEMBER 7-9, 2008

GUEST OF HONOR JOHN CASSADAY



MEET THE ARTIST ON
'LONE RANGER,'
'ASTONISHING X-MEN'



'THE JOKER'
TEAM OF
BRIAN AZZARELLO
AND LEE BERMEJO!



SPECIAL GUESTS
Mitch Breitweiser
Max Brooks
Frank Cho
Shane Davis
Marko Djurdjevic
Paul Duffield
Christos Gage
Ben Templesmith
Ethan Van Sciver
and more!

**SAVE UP TO 20% WHEN YOU
BUY YOUR TICKETS ONLINE!**

WIZARDWORLD.COM

BACK IN BLACK

'Afro Samurai: Resurrection' premieres in January on Spike TV

The *Afro Samurai* TV mini-series was the single best-selling anime DVD of 2007, so it should be no surprise that Spike TV, FUNimation and Gonzo have united once again to give life to Takashi Okazaki's unusual manga and original art. Blending the worlds of samurai folklore and modern urban lifestyle, the *Afro Samurai: Resurrection* movie will once again star Samuel L. Jackson and feature a hip-hop score by The RZA. Jackson is producing *Afro Samurai: Resurrection* as well as voicing Afro and his sidekick Ninja Ninja.

Voice work in supporting roles will be supplied by Lucy Liu (*Charlie's Angels*) and Mark Hamill (*Batman: the Animated Series*, *Star Wars*). The movie is set to debut on Spike TV in January 2009, followed by a DVD release in February 2009. In addition to the DVD rights, FUNimation will act as master licensee for all toys and other merchandise related to *Afro Samurai: Resurrection*. Next year will also see the release of the *Afro Samurai* videogame for the Xbox 360 and the PlayStation 3.

The original *Afro Samurai* followed the titular Afro as he tried to avenge his father's murder. In *Resurrection*, mysterious forces that serve the evil sorceress Sio (Lucy Liu) steal the remains of his father's body and the No. 1 headband that grants the power to rule the world. Sio has a zombie army, so it seems she wants Afro's father to be the



BACK TO BUSINESS *Afro Samurai's* titular Afro will return in January to continue his path of revenge.

zombie samurai who leads her troops into battle. Afro is forced to take up the sword again and don the No. 2 headband in order to reclaim his father's remains and restore peace.

Mark Hamill will play Sio's servant and warrior Bin. Yuri Lowenthal returns as Kuma, the warrior with the teddy bear head who was once Afro's friend.

Resurrection was extensively promoted through a star-studded event at San Diego's Comic Con back in July, which featured

Samuel L. Jackson, The RZA and Okazaki hosting the debut of the first trailer. Jackson describes the sequel as "Buck wild!" no doubt in reference to the over-the-top fight choreography, bizarre characters and intensely stylized animation. Jackson is also reportedly shopping *Afro Samurai* around Hollywood for a live-action treatment, seeking a younger actor to play the title role. Jackson, 59, has stated that he would prefer to play the role of Afro's father in the live-action version. ■ *Alicia Ashby*

COMING ATTRACTIONS

Three popcorn-sized movie updates for otaku

NINJA SCROLL 2?

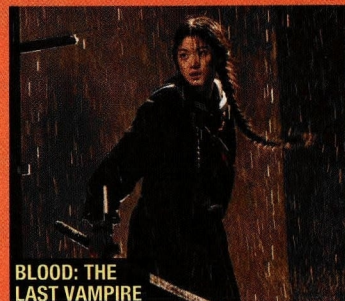
Rumors have flown for years about a sequel to the hit film *Ninja Scroll*. Studio Madhouse co-founder Masaharu Maruyama has finally made a statement about the status of *Ninja Scroll 2*, confirming that the project is in development...but that a script acceptable to creator Yoshiaki Kawajiri has yet to be found.

NEW FROM GHIBLI

Studio Ghibli confirmed four new animated projects. One is a new film by Yoshiyuki Momose (*Ghiblies 2*). Another is a film by Goro Miyazaki, director of *Tales from Earthsea*. Isao Takahata is working on a film based on a lullaby. Finally, co-founder Hayao Miyazaki is at work on new short films for the Ghibli Museum.

BLOOD IN THE THEATERS

Universal Studios will release a live-action adaptation of *Blood: The Last Vampire* in U.S. theaters this March. The movie will appear on about 2,000 screens nationwide. The film stars South Korean actress Gianna Jun as *Blood's* Saya, an immortal girl who hunts down vampires in 1970s Tokyo. ■ *AA*



BLOOD: THE LAST VAMPIRE

ANIME, INTERRUPTED

Osamu Tezuka's son to complete his final film

The late Osamu Tezuka's final work was an experimental film called *Legend of the Forest*, comparable in many ways to Walt Disney's *Fantasia*. Production began in 1987, but was brought to a halt by Tezuka's death in 1989. Only the first and fourth segments of the film were completed, which Tezuka had envisioned as a four-part work. Each part was to be set to one of the four movements of Tchaikovsky's *Symphony No. 4*. Now, Tezuka's son Macoto has announced that he will complete the unfinished portions of his father's unfinished work.



LEGEND OF THE FOREST

Macoto Tezuka is an accomplished film director in both live-action and animation, with 13 short and full-length films to his credit. Macoto announced in an August 10 blog post that he intends to complete the missing segments of *Legend of the Forest*.

Macoto Tezuka, as head of Tezuka Productions, has already overseen several revivals of his father's work. This includes Naoki Urasawa's *Pluto* manga, which reimagines a story arc from *Astro Boy* in a more modern style, and the four most recent *Black Jack* anime projects, which closely follow the original manga. Both completed segments of *Legend of the Forest* are available for \$1.99 each on iTunes. ■ A4

OH, MIKI!

Global manga 'Miki Falls' optioned by Paramount

Mark Crilley broke into the American comics market long before even the outdated term "OEL" had been coined (it's "global manga" now), or you could expect your neighborhood bookstore to have a massive selection of manga. Now the film rights to his most recent work, *Miki Falls*, have been acquired by Paramount and Plan B, a production company owned by Brad Pitt.

Miki Falls embraces the manga format to tell a story in four parts, each part reflecting a season of the year. The story details the senior year of high school student Miki Yoshida (right), who vows to befriend a stubborn and mysterious transfer student named Hiro Sakurai. All four parts are available through HarperCollins' HarperTeen imprint. Crilley's first work was *Akiko*, a series of American-format comic books and young adult novels that were widely praised.

Project Greenlight finalist and *Supernatural* producer Sera Gamble is currently attached to direct the project. No details about how Gamble intends to adapt the original material are available at this time, and press reports are being careful to conceal the surprising secret of Hiro Sakurai. ■ A4



CASTINGCALL

Revolutionary Girl Utena

Utena wants to be a prince, and will only wear the boy's uniform at Ohtori Academy. Although it seems like nothing bad ever happens at Ohtori, Utena stumbles upon its well-kept secret. In a duel to avenge a friend, she accidentally becomes engaged to the Rose Bride, Anthy. Sounds like a better movie than *She's The Man*!



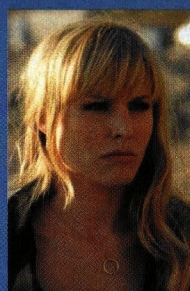
SCARLETT JOHANSSON as UTENA

Can Johansson go from *Girl with a Pearl Earring* to girl with a rose crest ring? Utena is a bold woman and a strong protector who stands up for her friend Anthy's personal freedom. Scarlett's got the spunk to take on this part.



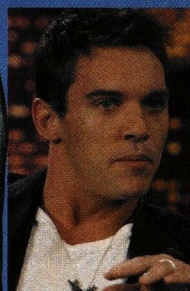
PARMINDER NAGRA as ANTHY

Nagra might have to tone it down from the activist she played in *Ella Enchanted*, but she's got the control to do so from her stint as Viola in a TV adaptation of Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*.



KRISTIN BELL as JURY

Bell's extensive experience in high school dramas like *Veronica Mars* and *Gossip Girl* combine with her prim looks and witty tongue to make her a lock to play Jury, the top duelist with a dark secret.



JONATHAN RHYS MEYERS as TOUGA

Who better to play the cruel playboy with the gorgeously long red hair than the sexy star of *Vanity Fair*, which even gave him a familiarity with the sword? No one, that's who.



SENDHIL RAMAMURTHY as AKIO

Smart is sexy—and the devious mastermind villain Akio is both, using his charms against even Utena herself. *Heroes*' Ramamurthy displays his own brains as scientist Mohinder. ■ Nadia Arcese

CAT ON A HAMPTON ROOF

Put on your ears and tail for Virginia's Nekocon

According to a certain Studio Ghibli movie, a cat will return—and a certain cat-named convention, Nekocon, returns this month to the Hampton Roads Convention Center in Virginia, along with plenty of anime industry guests.

Voice actor and ADR director Christopher Ayres (*Nerima Daikon Brothers*) and his brother and fellow actor Greg Ayres (*Koyuki, Beck: Mongolian Chop Squad*), artist and Studio Capsule co-founder Robert DeJesus and actors Troy Baker (*Abel, Trinity Blood*), Jerry Jewell (*Kyo, Fruits Basket*) and Aaron Dismuke (*Al, Full Metal Alchemist*) will all be on hand to meet fans. Also arriving this year are the creators of the *Applegeeks* webcomic, Ananth Panagariya and Mohammad Haque, and artist Dave Lister, whose webcomic *Paradox Lost* is set to be released in commercial book format.

Congosers looking for more convention and less crowd-fighting can enjoy their favorite activities at this small but lively con, which offers all the classics—panels, an art show, videogame tournaments, game shows, karaoke and an art auction—in a more intimate environment. Some events are a little off the beaten path, like remote-controlled car racing. Cosplayers can stop into the con-sponsored photo shoot area to have their picture taken by a pro or sign up to participate in the masquerade show.



When it comes to music, Nekocon's got the beat and will host live J-rock concerts by the group Echostream, which combines electronica and guitars to create dark beats, and the trio GPKISM, which performs songs described as "the manifestation of baroque essence" with an electronic sound and lovely gothic fashions.

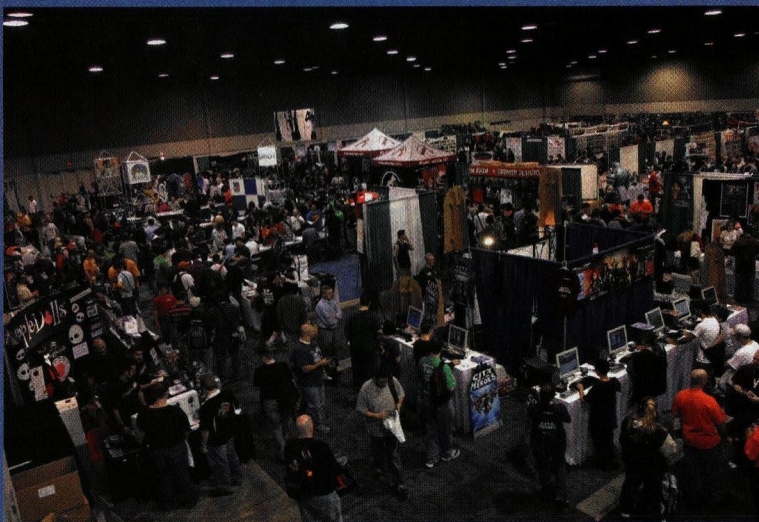
If you'd rather get down, this convention is home to two nights of grooving: Friday's Giant Robot Dance and Saturday's CATSEYE. Still got energy to burn? Join the live-action roleplay session. Those who plan ahead can enter the AMV contest, which has a tropical luau theme. Check out the party at www.nekocon.com ■ Meghan Grant

FANDOM ROUNDUP

Wizard World Texas combines anime and American comics

It's a meeting of two worlds at the Texas stop on the Wizard World convention tour. The latest party hosted by *Anime Insider's* parent company takes place at the Arlington Convention Center outside of Dallas. While not an exclusively anime event, the con offers programming sure to please the otaku crowd: specially planned panels, surprise anime screenings, workshops, an artist alley and more make this the anime-themed Wizard World.

Eisner Award-winning artist John Cassaday (*Astonishing X-Men*) is the guest of honor and leads the charge of an all-star line up: Max Brooks (*World War Z*), Brian Azzarello and Lee Bermejo (*The Joker*), Frank Cho (artist of *Mighty Avengers*), Shane Davis (*Superman/Batman*), DC Executive Editor Dan DiDio, Marko Djurdjevic (*Thor* artist), Paul Duffield (*Freak Angels*) and more. All preorder tickets come with a copy of *X-Men: Worlds Apart* #1 and *Jungle Girl Season 2* #1 variant covers, while specialized VIP packages include a variety of perks and bonus merchandise. Get your tickets at www.wizardworld.com. ■ MG





COSPLAY REVOLUTION

Leon Belmont from 'Castlevania: Lament of Innocence'

This costume debuted at Winter Comiket while I was living in Japan. The shots were taken at Higashiyama Cemetery in Takayama City, Gifu Prefecture. I passed by this graveyard daily and always thought it would be a great location for a cosplay shoot! What better setting could there be for the valiant Leon Belmont? I imagined fearlessly exploring the unknown spirit world while being wary of vampires and other arcane creatures. There's something about a traditional Buddhist cemetery that lends an exoticism to the scene.

Gathering the materials needed for the costume was a challenge, as the selection in rural Japan was limited; I had given up on finding the 18-foot bullwhip domestically. EBay was a great help, although shipping the whip from America cost more than the whip itself. Most of the other materials I bought in Tokyo. The spikes along the jacket were gathered during a monthly visit to Harajuku, and most of the fabric was purchased in Okadayaya, located near Shinjuku Station East Exit. Okadayaya is an amazing resource for beautiful fabric and craft materials, both traditional and modern.

The armor was made with medium thickness plastic sheets and secured with bolts. The striped pants and metal stud detailing was a painstaking process. The jacket has to be my favorite part of the costume. It was fun and challenging to figure out the pattern of the red leather detailing, and it was so dramatic in the snow. I stayed warm throughout my adventure, as there were many layers to this cosplay.

■ Dawn Mostow



CONJOB

AKI CON

November 7-9, Everett, WA
Among the falling leaves are cosplay and screenings, voice actor Chuck Huber (Hiro, *Shin chan*), and musical guests The Slants and Soul Candy. www.akicon.org

JANICON

November 20-23, Jacksonville, FL
Participate in the tournaments and LAN party, visit the manga library and enjoy everything else this anime & gaming event has to offer, like Studio Ironcat co-founder Steve Bennett and band J*Scape. www.janicon.org

ATLANTA SUPERCON

November 21-23, Atlanta, GA
The convention hosts a massive guest list, which includes big names from American animation, comics and movies, both from today and yesteryear. www.atlantasupercon.com

IZUMICON

November 21-23, Oklahoma City, OK
Enjoy game shows, an artist alley, a dance and more! Get ready to meet Laura Bailey (Tohru, *Fruits Basket*), Travis Willingham (Roy, *FMA*), Monica Rial (Jo, *Burst Angel*) and artist team Rikki Simons & Tavisha Wolfgarth (*ShutterBox*, *Reality Check!*) www.izumicon.com

ONI-CON

November 21-23, Houston, TX
Check out karaoke, a LARP and other programming. Hang out with Vic Mignogna (Takenaga, *The Wallflower*), Chris Bevins (Rada, *Jyu-Oh-Sei*) and Jamie Marchi (Rin, *Black Cat*). www.oni-con.com
■ MG



FULLMETAL ALCHEMIST'S ROY MUSTANG

SHADES OF GREY

New album, North American tour for J-rock giants

When it comes to J-rock and visual kei, it's difficult to find a bigger name than Dir en grey. With over 10 years of music and six hit albums to its name (not to mention a massive fanbase), Dir en grey has succeeded in carving out a legacy that will be remembered. Having managed the difficult cross-over to the American market, Dir en grey has some big plans in store for the future, including a new album in the States on November 11—before its Japanese release date—and a winter North American tour.

Just who is Dir en grey? The band consists of five members: Kyo on vocals, Kaoru and Die on guitars, Toshiya on bass and Shinya on drums. Kyo, Kaoru, Die and Shinya were members of an indie band called La:Sadie's that broke up around 1997. The four ex-members recruited a new bassist, Toshiya, and formed Dir en grey. They proceeded to attract the attention of ex-X Japan member Yoshiki, who had become a producing powerhouse in the J-rock circuit. With Yoshiki's help, the group made a huge splash, with several of its indie releases managing to find their way onto the Oricon charts. Although the band's genre is undeniably rock, it has never been afraid to experiment with different musical styles and presentation, making it continuously fresh and interesting to both die-hard and casual J-music fans.

Since then, Dir en grey has transitioned from up-and-comers into one of the hottest and most well known J-rock acts in the world. It has toured the U.S. on the Family



HARD ROCK ABS It apparently takes a lot of abdominal strength to rock as hard as Dir en grey.

Values tour, opened for bands like The Deftones and Linkin Park and even sold out its own solo dates. Of its six full-length albums—1999's *Gauze*, 2000's *Macabre*, 2002's *Kisou*, 2003's *Vulgar*, 2005's *Withering to Death* and 2007's *The Marrow of a Bone*—the most recent two have been released in the U.S. through the Free Will USA label.

This November marks the release of the new album, titled *Uroboros*. Kaoru has gone

on record saying that the album will contain "themes of guilt and reincarnation" as well as "the past, present and future of Dir en grey." The album is being distributed by The End Records in the States, and will come in various digital and physical versions. The band's North American tour will start shortly after the album release this winter. Check concert dates and find links to buy tickets and the album at the band's official MySpace page—www.myspace.com/direngrey. ■ Heidi Kemps

BACKSTAGEPASS

Spotlight on **HUSKING BEE**

They say that all good things must come to an end, but even when musical acts disband, their legacy lives on. Sometimes they might even be re-discovered years later when former members join new projects.

Husking Bee is one such band that no longer actively produces music, but is still fondly remembered by fans of Japanese punk. Originally founded in 1994, the band consisted of Isobe Masafumi on vocals, Kudo Tetsuya on bass and Hiramoto Leona on drums. Later

on in 2002, Kazuya Hirabayashi joined the band. Hirabayashi would later provide the singing voice for Koyuki Tanaka in the *BECK: Mongolian Chop Squad* anime series. (One of Husking Bee's songs, "Brightest," also appeared on the second *BECK* soundtrack CD).

The band released six albums and one compilation album before it formally disbanded in 2005. Two of their albums, *Put on Fresh Paint* and *Four Color Problem*, were distributed in the U.S., and may still be available from retailers. ■ HK



DIR EN GREY: FREE WILL USA; HUSKING BEE: TOY'S FACTORY

COAST TO COAST

MUCC crosses the U.S. for two concerts in December



MUCC

A taste of good J-rock music can be a hard thing to find. Frequently, fans' only chance to hear their favorite bands come when they're booked as guests at anime conventions, which carry their own set of expenses. But later this month, fans of the visual kei band MUCC can focus solely on the music as the group plays its first headlining shows in the U.S.—on both coasts.

Band members Tatsuro (vocals), Miya (guitar), SATOchi (drums) and former bass guitarist Hiro started out in 1997 as high school students from Ibaraki who dreamed of making it big. Once they met up with YUKKE (bass) two years later, MUCC was set to go, and they've never looked back. The band, whose name was inspired by a Japanese children's TV show and is sometimes called 69, based on the "muku" Japanese pronunciation of "sixnine," has a lengthy output for the time it's existed. MUCC has released eight full-length albums, along with numerous singles, EPs, live albums and DVDs, plus contributions to some compilation album—including last year's *Rob's Party Mix* soundtrack to the movie *Cloverfield*. The band's musical stylings are a mix of contradictions, combining heavy rock with "exotic" pop and conveying the emotions of "hope which exists in despair" with "warmth in sorrow and loneliness."

Although MUCC has played at Baltimore's Otakon and toured the U.S. on the Taste of Chaos tour in the past, it will be the star of the show when it plays at The Fillmore in New York on December 7 and Los Angeles' House of Blues on December 10. Following those concerts, MUCC will go back on tour through Europe and Asia, but fans can still hang on to the music; its new album, *Shion*, is being released in the States this month. Visit the band's official Myspace page at www.myspace.com/muccofficial for more information. ■ Angela Hanson

POPTOP

Japan's current best-selling singles and albums

To really understand Japan's sometimes-eclectic taste in music, check out what's on top of the weekly ORICON charts. ORICON stands for "original confidence" and is the Japanese equivalent of our Billboard charts.

WEEKLY TOP 10 SINGLES



1. Secret Code KINKI KIDS

Johnny's is a company very well known for its aggressive production and promotion of J-pop boy bands, and Kinki Kids has consistently been one of its strongest sellers. Kinki Kids actually holds a mention in the Guinness Book of World Records for its consistent success—the band holds the record for most consecutive #1 single debuts. With its latest release, "Secret Code," the guys add yet another chart-topper to their record. This release

marks #27 on their winning streak. Despite L'Arc~en~Ciel's popularity, they're stuck debuting at #2, because you just can't top a Kinki Kids single on the week it debuts—literally!

2. Nexus 4/Shine L'ARC~EN~CIEL

"Shine" is the opening theme for *Moribito*, which is currently airing in the U.S. on Cartoon Network!

3. Truth/Kaze no Muko he ARASHI

4. 20th Century Boys ACID BLACK CHERRY

5. Hisokan HISOKAN

6. Koishigure SHONAN NO KAZE

7. Gake no ue no Ponyo FUJIOKA FUJIMAKI AND NOZOMI OHASHI

Famed singing duo Takaaki Fujioka and Naoya Fujimaki recorded the theme to Hayao Miyazaki's newest theatrical hit with the help of now nine-year-old Ohashi.

8. I Am Your Singer SOUTHERN ALL STARS

9. Music!!!/Zero AAA

10. Atarashii Hibi/Ogon no Tsuki EVERY LITTLE THING

WEEKLY TOP 10 ALBUMS



1. Best Fiction NAMIE AMURO

Female idol singers in Japan aren't really known for having a lot of staying power. At 30 years old, most J-idols would be considered past their prime, but Namie Amuro's managed to beat the odds in a big way. Ever since her solo debut in 1995, she's been releasing chart-topping singles and albums, and has long been a fashion icon in Japan. Her image isn't quite as popular in the media as it was in the late '90s, but the five weeks and counting that this

compilation album has been sitting atop the Oricon charts goes to show that not only is Amuro as popular and influential as ever, but she's got an incredibly strong legacy of music backing her up.

2. Singles Best—HIDEAKI TOKUNAGA

3. DJ Makidai Treasure Mix VARIOUS ARTISTS

4. All Hope Is Gone SLIPKNOT

5. Re:Package LIVETUNE FEAT. MIKU HATSUNE

The virtual idol hits the big time with her very own CD. Hatsune Miku isn't an actual person, but a popular aquamarine-pigtailed character from the equally popular Vocaloid PC software series.

6. Climax Romantic Songs VARIOUS ARTISTS

7. Dice RSP

The first album from the half-female, half-male hip-hop foursome features "Kansha," the 14th ending song for the *Bleach* anime.

8. Makaiyugi ~ For the Movie DETROIT METAL CITY

Makaiyugi is the debut album from the band Detroit Metal City, which is from the movie of the same name, which is based on the manga of the same name. Confused yet? Don't be. Let the rock move you!

9. Utautai 15 Singles Best 1993-2007 KAZUYOSHI SAITO

10. Under the Radar DANIEL POWTER ■ HK

WEEKLY RANKING ON ORICON CHARTS FOR SEPTEMBER 1, 2008.

PORTABLE PERIL

The battle goes mobile in Ignition's 'Metal Slug 7' for the DS

Like it or not, all videogame consoles have a limited lifespan and must inevitably make way for better hardware and more advanced games. But if they're lucky, they just might leave behind a legacy that will cause gamers to remember them in a fondly nostalgic light—and all indications are that this is just the case with the release of *Metal Slug 7* from Ignition and SNK for the Nintendo DS, the latest in a series that goes all the way back to the Neo-Geo.

The hit action series started as a Neo-Geo arcade "run and gun" game in which the Peregrine Falcon Squad, armed to the teeth with futuristic, highly destructive weapons, pilot a tank through enemy territory in order to take down the forces of General Morden, who (as villains do) plans to take over the world. Future installments migrated to the Neo Geo Pocket, Sega Saturn, PlayStation, Xbox and beyond, keeping the same general storyline and play style, even as weapons and characters evolved, eventually including the would-be Earth conquerors the Mars People as both enemies and allies.

Metal Slug 7 features returning members of the Peregrine Strike Force and SPARROWS unit Marco, Tarma, Fio and Eri plus *King of Fighters* characters Ralf and Clark against General Morden's army. This time around, Morden's got help: a time-traveling army from the future sent to beef up his forces. Novice players, be warned; your choice of character can have a major impact on whether you achieve victory or suffer bitter defeat. Each has his or her own individual set of attributes; for example, Tarma doubles the benefits of power-ups and can use the Vulcan Fix



KEEP ON ROLLING To win, you'll have to use devastating weapons—nothing like mixing business with pleasure!

power, while Ralf's attack speed is twice as fast in melee mode—although his grenade supplies are cut in half. Choose carefully.

Players pilot the various characters in their slug vehicles through seven levels of enemy swarms. The key to victory isn't intricate skill, it's mass destruction—luckily, there's enough firepower to make it hap-

pen. New options include the Slug Gigant, a massively armed, extra-tall robot; the Slug Truck, a train-like vehicle with a cannon; and the aptly named Heavy Armor. Also returning from *Metal Slug X* are the Prisoners List feature and the Combat School Mode, which features over 80 missions. All in all, there's plenty to keep fans of shoot-until-you-drop games busy for hours, and the action starts November 18, when *Metal Slug 7* hits shelves for \$29.99.

■ Angela Hanson



REMATCH The Peregrine Strike Force faces off against General Morden and his army again, but this time he has help.



HEAVY ARTILLERY With this new installment come bigger and more destructive weapons, like the Slug Gigant and Slug Truck.



APPETITE FOR DESTRUCTION To win, you will need sharp gaming skills and the will to destroy absolutely everything in your way.

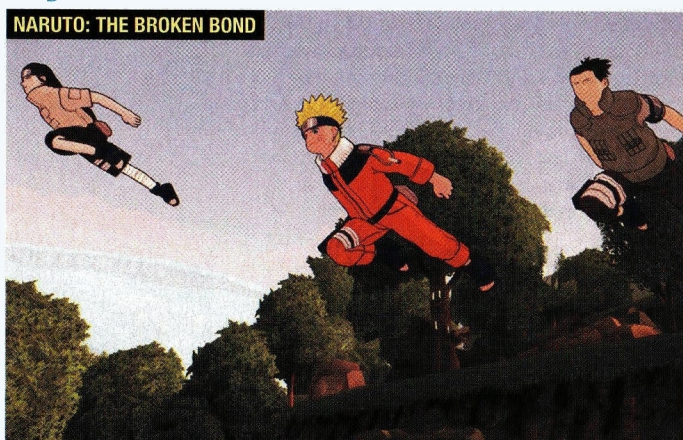
NARUTO VS. NARUTO

Two 'Naruto' titles battle for supremacy this month

NARUTO: ULTIMATE NINJA STORM



NARUTO: THE BROKEN BOND



Naruto is no stranger to rivalries, but when two different developers are releasing *Naruto* titles only a month apart, each exclusive to its own next-gen system, but both culminating in the Sasuke Retrieval arc, things are bound to get hot.

First to market is *Naruto: Ultimate Ninja Storm*, coming to the PS3 from Namco Bandai and CyberConnect2. Primarily a 3-D fighter, *Ultimate Ninja Storm* features one-on-one combat between more than 25 playable characters across large open battlefields. Though its primary emphasis is on the fighting, there is a substantial single player adventure mode as well, allowing you to explore the Hidden Leaf Village in search of quests and special items that will enhance your fighting skills and unlock new missions to fight through. *Ultimate Ninja Storm* spans the first five story-arcs, from the beginning to Naruto and Sasuke's epic waterfall showdown.



Next up in November is *Naruto: The Broken Bond* from Ubisoft for the Xbox 360. *The Broken Bond's* scope is narrower, but deeper, beginning where *Naruto: Rise of a Ninja* left off, shortly after Orochimaru's attack on the Hidden Leaf Village.

Like that earlier title, the story is presented as an action-adventure game with a fighting-based battle system. Unlike *Rise*, however, you're not limited to controlling one character at a time.

You'll have an entire three-man squad at your disposal, and you'll have to use all of their abilities strategically if you hope to defeat the many obstacles in their way. While the focus is adventure, *The Broken Bond* also features a Versus mode that allows for two-on-two battling, locally or online, with 25 playable characters.

With both of these titles bridging the gap between adventure game and fighter, there is sure to be plenty of friction between the two camps, but ultimately, the real winners are the gamers. ■ CE

CONTINUE? The latest gaming news and previews



FINAL FANTASY XIII

• STREET FIGHTER HITS HOME

Street Fighter IV is already in arcades, but it will be heading to consoles in March 2009, just in time for the feature film: *Street Fighter: The Legend of Chun Li*. Patrick Aiello, producer of that feature film, told GameDaily that Capcom is releasing in 2009, which is the 20th anniversary of the game. The film and game release dates will coincide.

• FINAL FANTASTIC!

SquareEnix has announced that the first playable demo of *Final Fantasy XIII* will be bundled with the Blu-Ray disc release of *Final Fantasy VII: Advent Children* in March 2009. The demo will allow gamers to play through the game's opening prologue, and according to director Motomu Toriyama, it could be as long or longer than *Advent Children* itself.

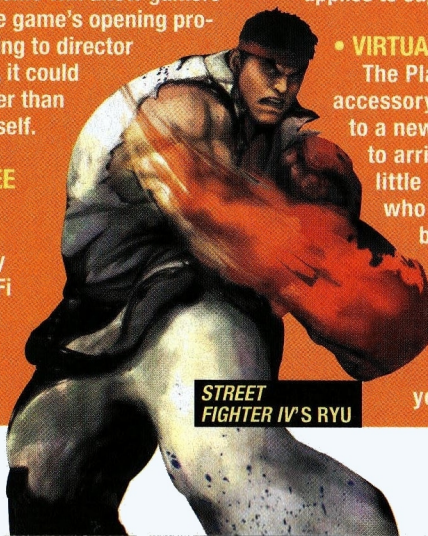
• PSP + FON = FREE

Sony Computer Entertainment Japan has recently partnered with Wi-Fi community FON to provide Japanese PSP users with free hot-spots

for downloading game demos, trailers, wallpapers and themes. The FON network offers over 44,000 hotspots across Japan, and each will allow PSP access to the Internet for free. Presently, this deal only applies to Japan.

• VIRTUAL MONCHICHIS

The Playstation Eye camera accessory wants to introduce you to a new friend. The EyePet, due to arrive in 2009, is an adorable little monkey-like creature who lives inside your PS3, but unlike previous virtual pets, the Eye camera records your movements and allows you to play with and care for your EyePet with your own hands. ■ CE



STREET FIGHTER IV'S RYU

videogamereleases NOVEMBER

ANIMAL CROSSING: CITY FOLK

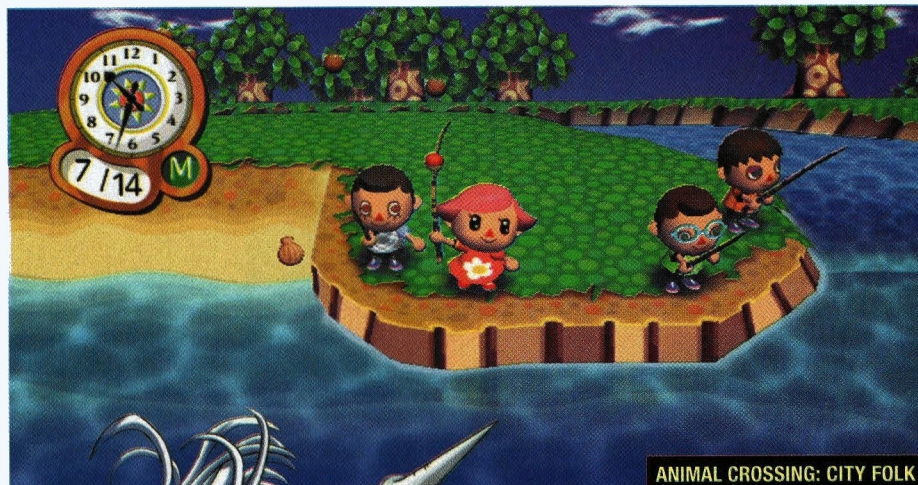
Why did Nintendo cross the road? To deliver the next *Animal Crossing*, of course! As with the Gamecube and DS versions, *Animal Crossing* for the Wii involves making friends with your cute animal neighbors, harvesting fruit, fishing, catching bugs and digging up fossils. *Animal Crossing: City Folk* adds a few new features to the winning formula, including a city you can visit with a theater and an Internet-ready auction house for your treasures. Plus, you can invite up to three friends to visit your town from the Internet, and with the optional Wii Speak accessory, you have full voice chat. (Nintendo, Wii, \$49.99)

CHRONO TRIGGER DS

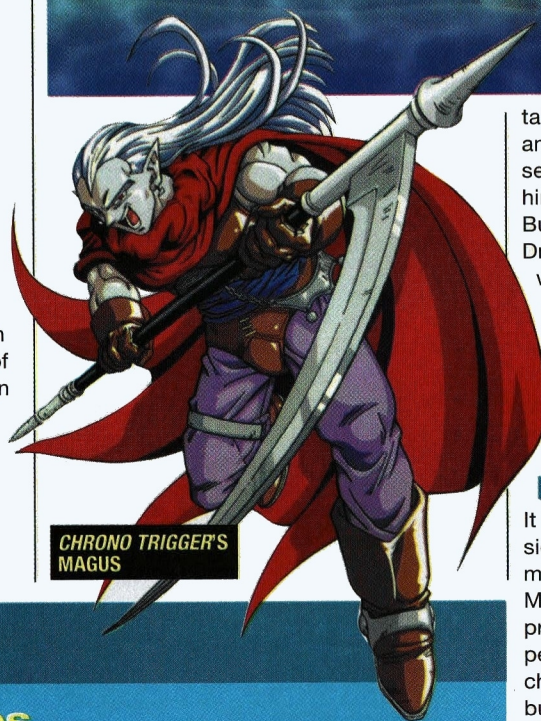
The original *Chrono Trigger* for the SNES was a groundbreaking RPG for its time, and SquareEnix is bringing it back on the DS. A girl is accidentally sucked through an experimental time-portal, and it's up to a boy named Chrono to save her. Rather than receiving a radical graphics upgrade, however, *Chrono Trigger DS* has time-traveled from 1995 in all of its 2-D sprite-based glory. The game has been adapted to make use of the dual-screens of the DS, as well as some basic touch-screen functionality, but for the most part, it replicates the original SNES version perfectly. (SquareEnix, DS, \$39.99)

DRAGON BALL: ORIGINS

Goku and friends are no strangers to videogames, but *Dragon Ball: Origins*



ANIMAL CROSSING: CITY FOLK



CHRONO TRIGGER'S MAGUS

takes Goku back to his roots in a videogame retelling of the original *Dragon Ball* series. You'll play as young Goku, guiding him through his first meeting with sidekick Bulma, and their quest to find the seven Dragon Balls. *Origins* is an adventure RPG with both action and puzzle elements, controlled entirely through the stylus and touch-screen. Great care has been taken to remain faithful to the source material, including the recreation of scenes from the classic anime in game. (Atari, DS, \$29.99)

ETERNAL POISON

It seems that a portal to a demonic dimension known as Besek has opened in the middle of the kingdom, and the monstrous Majin have emerged and kidnapped the princess. Don't you hate it when that happens? Many different adventurers have chosen to brave Besek to save the princess, but perhaps some are after the legendary treasure. *Eternal Poison* is a tactical RPG featuring five interlocking stories. You'll guide five different parties through the demon realm, each with their own motives and goals. On the way, will you defeat demons, or will you bind them to do your bidding? (Atlus USA, PS2, \$39.99)

LIPS

Now you can have your very own Karaoke party in the comfort of your own living room, all on your Xbox 360 with Microsoft's new singing game, *Lips*. You sing along to hit songs using a wireless microphone accessory, but there are a few surprising new twists. First, the game comes with two microphones to allow duets, and they are motion-sensitive for percussion accompaniments. Best of all, you can import your own existing music library! Any DRM-free MP3 will work, so prepare to go wild on all the J-Pop and Anime theme songs you like. (Microsoft, Xbox 360, \$69.99)

MUSTPLAY

Valkyria Chronicles

The world is at war, and the Duchy of Gallia is trapped between two superpowers, each bent on conquering the world. Set in an alternate timeline resembling pre-WWII Europe, *Valkyria Chronicles* tells the story of Welkin Gunther, a university student who reluctantly takes up arms to defend his homeland. The gameplay blends epic



RPG storytelling with semi-real-time strategic combat, but while some war games focus on the firepower, *Valkyria Chronicles* is very concerned with the human cost of war. Welkin will encounter a huge cast of characters as he fights to save his home. Combat engagements are managed a bit like *Fire Emblem*, in that each unit represents a specific character, that if lost, removes that character from the game forever. All hope is not lost though, because if you can reach your defeated unit in time, they can be rushed to a field medic. Visually, the game is gorgeous, with anime-like character design and a unique cel-shading style reminiscent of watercolors. Exclusive to the PS3, this title stands out in both gameplay and graphics. (Sega, PS3, \$59.99) ■ CE

LEAD YOUR COUNTRY
TO VICTORY



V

VALKYRIA

CHRONICLES™

COMING
NOVEMBER
2008



Real-time Battles



Legendary Warfare



Breathtaking Graphics

www.ValkyriaChroniclesGame.com



PLAYSTATION 3

SEGA is registered in the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office. SEGA, the SEGA logo and Valkyria Chronicles are either registered trademarks or trademarks of SEGA Corporation. ©SEGA. All Rights Reserved. "PlayStation", "PLAYSTATION" and "PS" Family logo are registered trademarks of Sony Computer Entertainment Inc.

SEGA®
www.sega.com

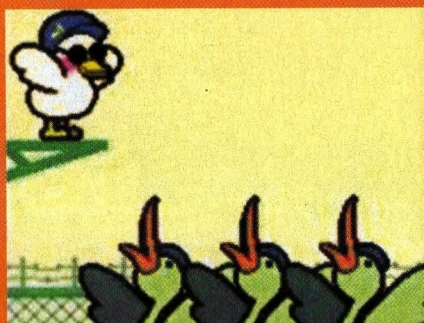
IMPORTREPORT

Japan's gaming goodness



KENKA BANCHO 3

The *Kenka Bancho* games are a series of High School Gangland beat-'em-ups featuring a leader with an intimidating laser eye. While the two previous games appeared on the PS2, *Kenka Bancho 3* will be released for the PSP in Japan this November. (PSP)



RHYTHM TENGOKU GOLD

Rhythm games and minigames have never been combined as delightfully as in *Rhythm Tengoku* on the GBA and *Rhythm Tengoku Gold* for the DS. Whether it's fueling up robots by pumping to the beat or helping a cartoon choir sing on cue, it's tons of fun. The DS version is coming to the U.S. in late 2008, but you'll still need to import the GBA original. (GBA, DS)



RYUSEI NO ROCKMAN 3

Ultra-fans of all things *Megaman*, or "Rockman" in Japan, can get a head start on the next installment of the *Star Force* saga on the DS. *Ryusei no Rockman 3* continues the story and gameplay of the previous installments, and is available in both "Red Joker" and "Black Ace" varieties. (DS) ■ CE



MORTAL KOMBAT VS. DC UNIVERSE

MORTAL KOMBAT VS. DC UNIVERSE

At first glance, *Mortal Kombat* and the DC Universe heroes like Superman and Batman seems like an odd pairing. Odd, maybe, but awesome. The action is fast and furious, and even if the goody-two-shoes heroes won't go for the kill, you can bet that their *MK* counterparts will show no such restraint. For ten dollars extra, the collector's edition includes a comic book, t-shirt and more. (Midway, PS3/Xbox 360, \$59.99/\$69.99)

NARUTO: THE BROKEN BOND

Picking up the pieces left from *Naruto: Rise of the Ninja*, *The Broken Bond* begins with the Leaf Village reeling from Orochimaru's attack, and carries the story of everybody's favorite knucklehead ninja through the completion of the Sasuke Retrieval Squad arc. As with the previous game, *Broken Bond* is an adventure game with fighter-based combat, but while before you could only control Naruto, this time you command a whole three-man squad. You'll need to use each member's special jutsu to solve puzzles, defeat enemy ninja and save the day! (Ubisoft, Xbox 360, \$59.99)

POKÉMON RANGER: SHADOWS OF ALMIA

Shadows of Almia presents a Pokémon-themed RPG, but without turn-based combat. As the Pokémon runs around the screen, you use your "Ranger Styler" to draw circles around it. Each unbroken circle makes the Pokémon friendlier. Instead of collecting Pokémon, you partner with a few. Others can be used for their abilities, then released into the wild. *Shadows of Almia* takes place in the new Almia region with plenty to explore and plenty of adventures. (Koei, DS, \$29.99)

TALES OF SYMPHONIA: DAWN OF THE NEW WORLD

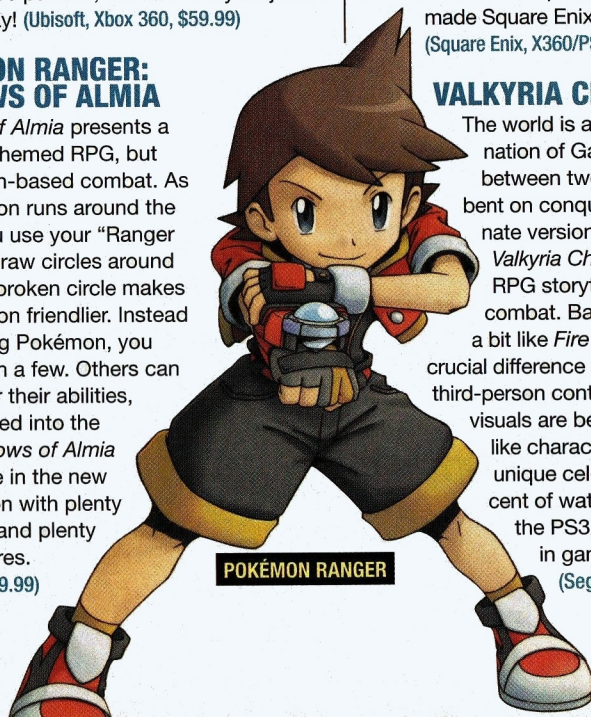
It's been two years since the events of the original *Tales of Symphonia*, and it's high time for another adventure. *Dawn of the New World* will feature familiar faces, but it concentrates on the story of two new protagonists: Emil, a shy young swordsman, and Marta, a girl with the ability to speak with monsters. *Dawn of the New World* allows for some Pokémon-style monster capturing, and features the same cel-shaded visual style as the previous game, as well as action combo-based battles. (Namco Bandai, Wii, \$39.99)

THE LAST REMNANT

Not content with remakes and sequels, Square Enix has some brand new games that may well become new franchises in their own right. In *The Last Remnant*, the world is ruled by the energy of mysterious artifacts, and these "Remnants" can be anything from a skeletal dragon to a skyscraper-sized sword embedded in the ground. The graphics are gorgeous, and the game features an epic storyline with the sort of deep RPG gameplay that has made Square Enix titles so enduring. (Square Enix, X360/PS3, \$59.99)

VALKYRIA CHRONICLES

The world is at war, and the small nation of Gallia is trapped between two superpowers, each bent on conquest. Set in an alternate version of 1930s Europe, *Valkyria Chronicles* blends epic RPG storytelling with strategic combat. Battles are managed a bit like *Fire Emblem*, with the crucial difference that you'll have full third-person control of each unit. The visuals are beautiful, with anime-like character designs and a unique cel-shading style reminiscent of watercolors. Exclusive to the PS3, this title stands out in gameplay and graphics. (Sega, PS3, \$59.99)



POKÉMON RANGER

anime

NEVER MISS AN ISSUE...
**NOW
MONTHLY!**

INSIDER

FUTURE ISSUES WILL FEATURE:

- NEW AFRO SAMURAI
- GUNDAM 00
- BLEACH
- HOLIDAY GIFT GUIDE
- ROMEO X JULIET
- AND **MUCH MORE!**

IT'S ALWAYS
FASTER AT
WIZARD
UNIVERSE
.COM



CLIP OUT OR COPY THIS COUPON AND
SEND IT TO: WIZARD ENTERTAINMENT
PO BOX 2175, DANBURY, CT 06813-2175

**THE #1
ANIME
MAGAZINE
IN THE
COUNTRY**

anime
INSIDER 超月刊誌

- ☐ YES 12 ISSUES OF ANIME INSIDER FOR JUST \$28
- ☐ YES 24 ISSUES OF ANIME INSIDER FOR JUST \$49.99

Payment enclosed. Bill my: ☐ Visa ☐ MC ☐ Discover ☐ Amex ☐ Bill Me
[Make checks payable to Wizard Entertainment.]

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ ZIP _____

E-mail address _____

Credit Card # _____ Expiration Date _____

X

Card Holder's Signature _____

Please allow 7 to 10 weeks for delivery of first issue. Canadian orders: 12 issues for \$44 U.S.; all other foreign orders: 12 issues for \$80 U.S.



SQUISHILICIOUS

They say that Japan has a monopoly on cuteness, but the folks over at Squishable (www.squishable.com) are giving it a run for its money. Forget your standard anime character plushies—these oversized, adorable animals are many times the size of your head and as soft and cuddly as you could ever want. Whether it's a hedgehog, sheep or panda, Squishable's dozens of animals will make your day brighter. (Squishable, \$38-42)

DEATH AT HAND

The convention season of 2008 may be over, but as 2009 draws near, there's no reason not to get ready for the next one. Step one: get something to carry around all the swag you'll buy! This *Bleach* messenger bag is just one of many that's suitable for toting around DVDs, manga, and more. (GE Animation, \$32.99)



NOT ONE, BUT TWO

Don't let their colorful language fool you; pirates read, too! These equally colorful *One Piece* bookends feature Luffy and the rest of the Straw Hat pirates. They support your pirate pride and your manga collection at the same time. Get this booty while you can.

Supply is limited to 1,000 fully painted pieces. Stretchy superpowers not included. (Toynami, \$175)





GREAT IN GREY

He's not your average ninja; Little Ninj's duty is to protect the last cherry tree in the Black Woods, for its destruction would obliterate nature. Lucky for him it's not the Regular Woods because camo really clashes with his geometric design. At 14 inches, Little Ninj is stuffed with stealth and more elusive than the TV remote. Watch out the next time you jump into a pile of plushies. (Fun Fun, \$19.99)

PERSONAL PROTECTOR

Before there was *Ghost in the Shell*, Mamoru Oshii directed the grimly futuristic *The Red Spectacles*. Twenty-one years later, fans can snag a detailed six-inch version of the film's Protect Gear soldier, which comes with numerous weapon accessories and 37 points of articulation. (Organic Hobby, \$24.99)



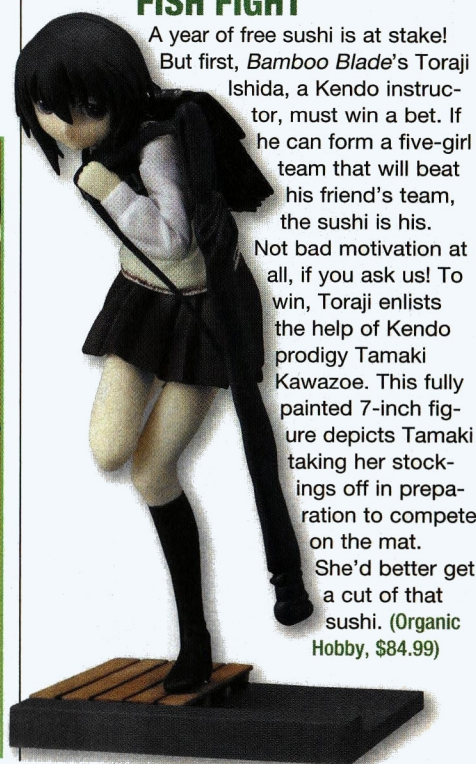
FANTASIES IN REAL LIFE

They're the heroes of several stories, the saviors of multiple worlds—and they're just so darn cute. Longtime fans of the *Final Fantasy* RPG series should enjoy the latest series of 2-inch Trading Arts minis. Teaming up in this set are Aerith from *FFVII*, Tidus from *FFX* and Balthier and Fran from *FFXII*. (Square Enix, \$18.99)



FISH FIGHT

A year of free sushi is at stake! But first, *Bamboo Blade*'s Toraji Ishida, a Kendo instructor, must win a bet. If he can form a five-girl team that will beat his friend's team, the sushi is his. Not bad motivation at all, if you ask us! To win, Toraji enlists the help of Kendo prodigy Tamaki Kawazoe. This fully painted 7-inch figure depicts Tamaki taking her stockings off in preparation to compete on the mat. She'd better get a cut of that sushi. (Organic Hobby, \$84.99)



SKY HIGH

Anime teaches us so many things. First: when it comes to saving the world, little girls in super-powered exoskeletons are the way to go. That's the most obvious lesson of *Sky Girls*, in which Eika, Karen and Otaha pilot Sonic Divers to save the earth. You can use this 6-inch PVC state of Otaha to remind you of lesson number two: it's just as important to look cute while you're being heroic. (Organic Hobby, \$79.99)



BEHOLD MY
FEARSOME
BATTLE
MONOCLE!

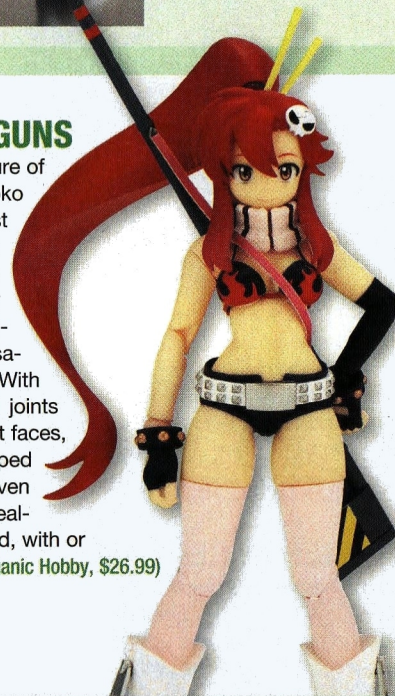


VIRAL INFECTION

What's *Gurren Lagann* got in spades, even more than flashy fanservice? Mighty mecha. Here to oppose Simon and Kamina's *Gurren Lagann* is Viral and the Enki. This six-inch figure has a whopping 55 points of articulation and arrives with multiple accessories, extra wing parts and the head of *Gurren Lagann* itself, a trophy of battle. (Kaiyodo, \$24.99)

BIG GUNS

This 6-inch action figure of *Gurren Lagann*'s Yoko is one of the newest Fraulein Revoltech designs. The line was specially designed by Enoki Tomohide to represent beautiful and versatile female characters. With 19 articulation points, 11 joints parts and four different faces, she is definitely equipped for action. That's not even mentioning the many realistic poses she can hold, with or without her gun. (Organic Hobby, \$26.99)

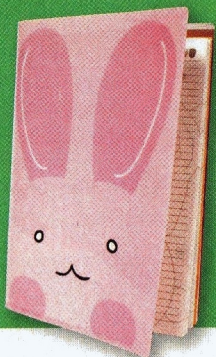


THANKSJAPAN

Cool and crazy swag from overseas

BE OUR HOST

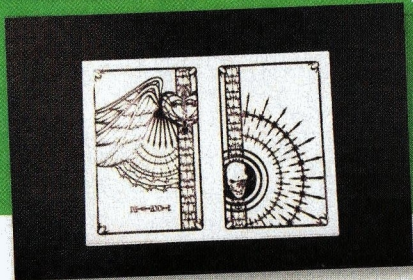
Honey's pink bunny adorns every page of the notebooks tucked into the side pockets of this *Ouran High School Host Club* folder. Aww!



TIME TO MEET YOUR DOOM



Keep time to this Zeon symbol from *Mobile Suit Gundam*—after all, you don't want to be late to the revolution.



STAPH UP

In *Moyashimon*, college student Tadayasu Sawaki can see and talk to micro-organisms, like this happy staph bacteria magnet. Beware: It's not just its cuteness that will make you sick.



MEOW MAGIC

What happen when you mix a military series with Japan's culture of cute? Apparently, this Suzaku (*Code Geass*) cat-boy phone charm. ■ Nadia Arcese

WIZARD anime INSIDER 超月刊誌

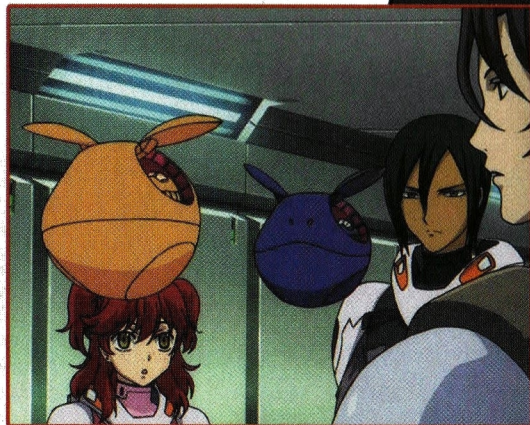
BEST O' THE BEST 2008

#63

We watched them, we rated them and now they're here—the absolute best anime, manga, toys and more from 2008!

THE WAGES OF WAR

▼ In space, no one can hear you blow up. Dive into battle with *Gundam 00*!



BLEACH ANIME © TITE KUBO / SHUEISHA • TYTOKYO • DENSO • PIERROT, MOBILE SUIT GUNDAM 00 © SOTSU, SUNRISE, BBS.

IN COMIC STORES
NOVEMBER 19, 2008
ON NEWSSTANDS
DECEMBER 2, 2008

GOING POSTAL

Why Japanese addresses are enough to drive anyone crazy



SIGN UP This vertical building label is a standard address marker—a lot more complex than your usual American street number!

The Japanese have created incredible breakthroughs in science and technology, but not in simple addresses. Try to find any location in Tokyo is akin to having a treasure map—some details might be there, but you'll have to do a lot of digging in order to find the treasure. The problem is that very few roads—other than major ones—have names, so addresses almost never mention them. Additionally, Tokyo is so big, it has to be broken into several pieces of increasingly small size in order to find anything, which means that Tokyo address ends up being full of codes that progressively zoom in on a location.

Let's look at the address of Studio Gonzo's headquarters as an example:

Shinjuku Chuo Koen Building 8F
4-33-4 Nishi-Shinjuku
Shinjuku-ku, Tokyo
Japan 160-0023

The "160-0023" is a postal code, equivalent to an American zip code. Obviously, Tokyo is the city, and Shinjuku is the ward in which Gonzo is located. Unlike most Japanese cities, Tokyo is so big it includes several dozen cities and wards inside it; the cities are called "shi," while the wards, like Shinjuku, have the postfix "ku."

Nishi-Shinjuku is the *section* of the Shinjuku ward where the building is; generally, these smaller districts are generally called "cho" or "machi." Now, Nishi-Shinjuku is still a large area, which is divided up into numbers—hence the first "4" in "4-33-4." These numbers have been assigned arbitrarily, and there is no system for figuring them out in Nishi-Shinjuku or anywhere else in Tokyo. To know it, you essentially have

to find it out on your own (or become a Japanese postal worker).

Since so few roads have names, the way the Japanese specify location is by block numbers, which is the "33," meaning, yes, the Gonzo building is on the 33rd block of the fourth section of the Nishi-Shinjuku district in Shinjuku in Tokyo. Like the district numbers, the block numbers are randomly assigned, and follow no set pattern among districts or even inside districts—the "1" block can easily be next to the "33" block. Some places have maps outside train stations that say which block is which, but not all.

Finally, the last "4" denotes the building number on the block, and is the closest thing to our American house numbers. But again, these numbers are random. Sometimes they go clockwise. Sometimes they're counter clockwise. There's no telling where the "1" building is on each block.

Why all this confusion? It's actually the result of World War II, and the massive bombing of Tokyo that leveled most of the city. After the war, roads were created randomly—often over prior city blocks—faster than they could be named, so the government didn't bother. As blocks and buildings were developed, they generally got the next number on the list, without regard to location or the future. Likewise, many block's buildings were numbered in the order they were built, no matter where on the block they were.

It's a clunky, confusing system, but somehow, the Japanese have made it work for over 60 years and counting; with practice, it can be mastered. Just remember, if you need to get anywhere in Japan, make sure to ask for directions. ■ Rob Bricken

EAT IT

Karl Cheese Puffs

A bearded farmer mascot proudly shouts about this cheese-flavored snack, which is light and crunchy, and kind of smells like boxed mac & cheese.



DRINK IT

Ichigo Squash White

Is there squash in it? No. What this pale pink drink does have is strawberry juice, sweetened condensed milk and enough sugar to send a horse into a coma. Sold!



WEAR IT

Tatami Necktie

Tatami, the tightly woven matting used for flooring, is getting a business makeover. A mere 5,800 yen gets you this ultimate fusion of East and West. ■ Summer Mullins



CLUB CIRCUIT

Japanese after school clubs are more than just entertainment

Most kids can't wait to get out of school every day. But once sports teams and other extracurricular activities enter the picture...well, most still opt to head straight home and play videogames. In Japan, however, school clubs aren't just an option for students; they're an important part of young academic life.



FRUITS BASKET'S YUKI FAN CLUB

as well be, considering the huge amount of pressure students receive from parents, teachers and peers to join them. Clubs tend to start early, as well; some school sports teams form as early as the equivalent of third grade. Most

clubs, however, begin around junior high. For the three years of their junior high school experience, students join a club and engage regularly in their chosen club's activities. When they reach high school, they can continue with clubs covering similar subject matter, or they can choose to explore something entirely new. The pros of school clubs—and the reason they're considered so important—include teaching the benefits of teamwork and allowing peers with similar interests to socialize, but mainly providing experience that can impress on a college application or job resume.

Most schools have a variety of clubs covering common interests like music, art and sports, as well as beloved Japanese cultural activities like ikebana (flower arrangement), judo, taiko drumming and sumo wrestling. Some schools even offer manga clubs where illustrations and stories are drawn and shared. And while you probably won't find any clubs like *Genshiken*'s at your typical Japanese high school, you might be able to see a school manga club selling its compilations at events like Tokyo's Comic Market. ■ HK

JPN101 Learn Japanese (slowly)



This month's lesson: BARGAIN-HUNTING

CHUUKO (*chew-ko*) Used goods.

FURUHONYA (*foo-rhoo-hone-yah*) A secondhand bookstore, great for a manga fix on the cheap! Try finding branches of the nationwide Book-Off chain.

HYAKUEN-YA (*hee-yah-koo-en-yah*) 100-yen store. Similar to dollar stores in North America

JYANKU SHOPPU (*ji-yan-ku sho-pu*) English "Junk Shop," a place where you can find used and discontinued-model electronics for cheap...but they may need some repairs to function.

KEN (*ken*) A coupon or ticket.

MURYOU (*mu-hree-yoh*) Free.

NEBIGI (*neh-bee-gee*) Discount.

OKANE (*oh-kah-nay*) Money.

SEERU (*say-ru*) Sale.

YASUI (*ya-soo-ee*) Cheap.

IKURA DESU KA? "How much is this?"

OKANE GA SUKUNAI. "I don't have much money."

ICHIBAN YASUI NO [OBJECT] WO KUDASAI. "I'll take the cheapest [object], please." ■ HK

TOKYOTRAVELOGUE

Nihon Minkaen Open-Air Folk House Museum

A hidden treasure trove of historical artifacts can be found in this one museum located on the side of a huge hill in the middle of a forest, located about 15 minutes' walk from Noborito Station, just 25 minutes by train from Kawasaki, and entry costs just 500 yen for hours of educational fun!

In order to preserve historic architecture from around Japan, in 1965 the city of Kawasaki began dismantling historical houses dating back to the 17th Century and relocated them here, so that now there are 25 fascinating structures, including a shrine, a watermill and a kabuki theater.

Functional furniture, tools and utensils are also kept, as well as recreations of original thatch roofing and tatami flooring—and there's a wonderful soba restaurant hidden away in one of the old farmhouses.

It's a mesmerizing place that transports you away from this bustling metropolis to a more tranquil time, when no neon signage or J-pop pervaded our everyday activities. Just occasionally, that's a blessing. ■ Andrez Bergen



CARS THESE
DAYS ARE SO
LAZY...NOT LIKE
WHEN I WAS A
KID.

SOFSUS

High Five

7-Eleven

7-Eleven

partingshot

The Osaka region of Japan is known for its food, but this is no drive-thru—this contraption is a car wash! Unlike the ones we know, this one moves over a stationary car. From the looks of it, it occupies less space and is probably easier to plunk down anywhere than a normal car wash. This is an important innovation for a Japanese city whose daytime population is second only to Tokyo. Just park your car between the two black rails on which the washer moves. We know, it's not the same as the magical ride through soapy bubbles and giant scrubbers, but there's no need for that when you're surrounded by all that Osaka has to offer, including kabuki theatre, bunraku (puppet theatre), manzai (stand-up comedy) and famous regional cuisine. ■ *Nadia Arcese*

THE #1 FOOTWEAR BRAND
FOR THE OTAKU GENERATION



THE MOST COMFORTABLE SHOES YOU'LL EVER WEAR...
THE LAST BRAND YOU'LL EVER BUY

ONMYODOO

Buy Now

ONMYODOO ONLINE

Available At

amazon.com

ONMYODOO NAME, LOGO AND ALL CORRESPONDING IMAGES ARE PROPERTY OF ONMYODOO, LLC 2007-2008
BACKGROUND IMAGE "SHINSHU SUWAKO" - HOKUSAI KATSUSHIKA
AMAZON, AMAZON.COM AND THE AMAZON.COM LOGO ARE REGISTERED TRADEMARKS OF AMAZON.COM, INC. OR ITS AFFILIATES

KONAMI



LIGHT OR DARK?

Only YOU can decide!

Will you stand beside Shu and his friends to battle the dark forces of Grankindom? Or, will you align with Nene in his quest to rule the universe? Choose and wield your Shadows wisely. The fate of the world is in your hands.



Make your deck even more powerful with the cards from the Heroes Arise booster set!

The 60-card set consists of all unique content and various rarity levels!

Packaging subject to change.

**BUY IT
★ NOVEMBER 4TH ★
at a
Hobby Store
Near You!**



In collaboration with MISTWALKER © BLUE DRAGON // TV TOKYO
Based on the Xbox 360 game "BLUE DRAGON" published by Microsoft
Blue Dragon and Blue Dragon logo are trademarks of the Microsoft group of companies.

For more information visit:
www.konami.com/bluedragonrpg